



ISFS IN ACTION: PERSONALISING BLOCK CONTRACTS

A Research Report

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MARCH 2012



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SUMMARY

This report describes one of the most important and ground-breaking initiatives in the development of personalisation in adult social care. By working in partnership a service provider, Choice Support, and a local authority, Southwark Council have:

- Broken down a large block contract for 83 people into individual budgets
- Created Individual Service Funds (ISF) for more flexible services
- Begun creating better and more empowering services for those they serve
- Developed a more dynamic and respectful relationship between a service provider and commissioner

This report is the first of three short research reports outlining progress and describing the steps necessary to make the changes.

FOREWORD

Choice Support was pushing at an open door when they suggested an Individual Service Fund approach for transforming their services in Southwark.

Back in 2010, as now, we faced significant budget pressure and needed to reduce our reliance on residential care and to offer ordinary living options that would give people better outcomes, foster greater independence and increase social inclusion.

It is therefore understandable that we were willing to buy into a proposal that wiped away an outdated care model, with complicated historic funding arrangements, and endless care fund calculator negotiations; and replaced it instead with a model where people with learning disabilities had their own homes and control over the support they required to live the lives they chose.

The work has been complicated and difficult at times. There were some particularly tricky moments when agreeing the level of savings to be taken from the old arrangements and the subsequent transitional funding arrangements that have been put in place to allow Choice Support time to change their business model. There were also some difficult discussions at the panel that agreed people's actual support plans and ISF allocations. However these complexities were overcome by an understanding on both sides that what we were trying to do was right and in the best interests of the people using the services.

Chris Dorey

Commissioning Manager, Southwark Council

1. INTRODUCTION

Choice Support services began in Southwark in 1984, originally under the name Southwark Consortium (a pioneering organisation developed as part of the first wave of hospital closures). In 2010 Choice Support provided - in Southwark - services for 152 people: 66 in registered care, 32 in supported living and 54 supported by an outreach service.

This report describes the beginnings of a three year project (2010-13) to transform a block contract worth in excess of £6 million, to develop individual funding for the 83 people and hence to transform the options and supports available to people in Southwark.

This is one of the first examples of the personalisation of such a large and long-standing block contract. It was achieved by working closely with people, all their friends and families, the staff of Choice Support and all the professionals from Southwark Adult Services, Commissioners, Southwark Primary Care Trust and the Care Quality Commission.

The saving will be £1.79 million over 4 years which is a 29.75% saving for Southwark Adult Services. But more importantly personalisation is the right thing to do and there is much learning that can be shared.

2. GETTING STARTED

Choice Support seconded an experienced director as the dedicated project manager. A team of representatives from Southwark Adult Services, Southwark Primary Care Trust and Choice Support was created and their project plan was finalised in June 2010.

The team's objectives are to:

- agree a reduction in contract price
- allocate ISFs
- offer 83 people a personalised service by 2013
- recruit more Personal Assistants

FINANCIAL PLANNING

In December 2010 Choice Support made immediate savings and identified projected savings by the end of each financial year. A transitional fund was created from these savings.

The key savings agreed included reducing:

- the direct cost of hourly support rate
- local and central overheads to 15% of ISFs
- provision of support based on person centred plans (PCPs)

Furthermore these savings were achieved by:

- deregistering existing homes
- reducing the cost of each support hour i.e. changes in existing staff terms & conditions and management restructure
- reducing direct support hours, including waking nights and increased use of Assistive Technology (AT)
- reducing overheads and closure of the local office

PERSON CENTRED PLANS

Using PCP tools, Choice Support explored what each person really wanted in their life and recorded this in their support plan. We made changes to staffing at night by using AT to help people gain more independence and alert staff when they were actually needed. We also changed the way we managed our services and other departments like IT, Finance and HR to focus on providing services to individuals.



Case Study: What it meant for Roger and Christine

Roger says: "We had a family meeting and talked about changes with the money. The housing officer explained about the tenancy, the rent and changes and asked us if this is ok?"

Roger now has short periods during the day without staff support. He says: "I've got used to it. It was a bit strange at first when the staff went off because before they used to stay all the way through."

Christine says: "My Mum came in for a meeting and talked about rent and how money is going to be spent. I have more money than when I came here."

Roger says: "Once a week staff talk about some new things we can try. I like to be a busy person. I do different things every day."

INDIVIDUAL SERVICE FUNDS

An Individual Service Fund is just one way of managing someone's individual budget. It means that their budget is managed for them by their service provider. This budget is protected - it is still the person's money - and it can be used flexibly to achieve the person's preferred outcomes. But they do not need to manage the money directly or to employ staff. Instead the organisation, in this case Choice Support, can do that for them.

Not everybody will want an Individual Service Fund. Some people may prefer to manage the money themselves or to let a family member or other representative manage the money. But it is a good solution for some people.

Choice Support designed a Resource Allocation System (RAS) to set the level of the ISF for each person, based on their PCP support plan. Choice Support is making this RAS available to others and more information is available from Choice Support (see page 14 for contact details).

AGREEING THE PCP SUPPORT PLANS

The PCP support plans were considered by a specially created panel comprised of Southwark's Community Learning Disabilities Team, local Commissioners together and staff from Choice Support. All 83 plans were agreed and implementation is being phased over three years.

3. KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

By November 2011, a little more than a year after the original plan was agreed, the following has been achieved:

- The old block contract has been converted to 83 ISFs.
- 83 personalised support plans have been created.
- ‘Waking-nights’ have been removed from 11 services making Southwark ‘waking-night’ free.
- Increased use of Assistive Technology.
- 18 care homes are de-registered.
- Phased closure of a former PCT campus-like site has begun.
- A Shared Lives service has been established.

SAVINGS

The significant savings that have been made and are planned are outlined in the table below:

FINANCIAL YEAR	PER ANNUM	CUMULATIVE
2010-11	£324,250	£324,250
2011-12	£310,750	£635,000
2012-13	£260,314	£895,314
2013-14	£250,041	£1,145,355
2014-15	£649,718	£1,795,073

4. WHAT HAS WORKED WELL?

The project has also had other other benefits:

- The public commitment by Southwark Commissioners and Choice Support to work closely together on this project has built a relationship of real trust.
- Having lead managers in place with experience of successful re-provisions from the past has helped people to have the confidence to negotiate some of the complex issues faced.
- The elimination of ‘waking-nights’, with a process of consultation and risk assessments seems successful. An academic evaluation of this process is expected early in 2012 from the Buckinghamshire University Social Care Evaluation Unit.



Case Study - The challenges of change

Emmanuel, Area Manager said: “During the Assistive Technology trial period at J Street a complaint was made by night wake staff. During the investigation it was discovered that a person was not being supported to use incontinence

pads before going to bed. The new alarm was being set off because of this. The AT alarm has alerted management of poor practice and staff were disciplined. Two staff complained to families to get them to resist the proposed changes. This went to Southwark Adult services and we met them together, the Commissioner even attended some of these meetings. Eventually they were reassured that everything would be put in place to support their relatives well. When families were part of developing the support plans this resolved their concerns. Despite difficult beginnings the outcomes for people living at J Street have improved. People now know how many hours of support they get and they demand their one to one support as they know they're entitled to it.”

- Expert consultants, Nan Carle and Simon Duffy facilitated training for both Southwark and Choice Support staff.
- Making the role of managers clearer, creating more autonomy and reducing red tape has helped people remain within their new ISF budgets.

Case Study - The services manager

Jon is a Services Manager for three people at Y Road with severe disabilities and complex needs. Jon says: “The people and their circle of supporters were at the centre of decision-making. They discussed whether people should remain living at Y Road and who should provide the support. Community care and Mental Capacity Assessments were completed by Southwark.”

When Jon started there were 16 staff and four staff on each shift with an additional ‘floating person’ and 1 night wake shift. With ISFs he now has 11.5 staff. Four staff are on shift twice a day but the rota is much more flexible, with one sleepover rather than ‘night-waking’ which has led to a 20% saving.

Jon says: “More activities are happening now for people at Y Road. Flexibility is created by 80% staffing and by not having a full staff team. Nothing untoward has happened since the changes. The fears of family and staff about changes to the level and quality of support were allayed. Over time everyone has accepted and supported the move to deregister and to personalise the service.”

- Encouraging positive relationships between all staff to enable new working practices focusing all our services on individuals.
- The valued relationships that Choice Support staff have with people they support and their families.
- The three year timescale gives time to refine the support plans and match people's needs with available resources.

- Natural wastage allows Choice Support to recruit new staff on different terms and conditions. This will translate into a lower hourly rate.



Case Study - An ISF in practice

John, supported on an ISF in Southwark, says: "I like living here. We moved in when it first opened, years ago. I like going out, to the pensioners club and enjoying myself, pubs and restaurants, all over the show. A man from Social services came in to have a meeting with us to find out if people understand about changes in the way to spend money."

Some days are shared support and John gets one to one support, to collect his benefits and do his shopping. He says: "I get a lot of hours, I get the support I need. I'm capable of doing things myself. We can all please ourselves. I'm happy with that."

5. WHAT WOULD WE CHANGE?

At the start there were tight timescales and deadlines to meet. It has taken time to help people, their families and our staff to understand the project. We would have liked more time to engage people we support to lead the project right from the beginning.

Chris Dorey, Commissioning Manager, Southwark Council writes:

We all recognise that the project is not over; changes so far have largely been structural. While increasing numbers of people have tenancies and all have support plans and control over personal budgets, we are aware that people are living in buildings that used to be care homes and are being supported by people who are used to working in care homes. Both of us are therefore alive to the risk that nothing really changes and that the project could simply result in relabeled residential care.

To avoid this it will be important that people's support plans are real, that they truly reflect what people want to do with their lives and that they really happen. It will also be vital that deregistered services change and that we respect people's newly acquired rights as tenants by changing old institutional customs and practices about how buildings are used and how support is provided. People must be allowed to choose who they live with and who has access to their home.

We will all use the learning and energy created by the first phase of the project to make this happen.

6. CONCLUSION

This project has generated learning for all those involved; the way forward has not always been smooth. We are living in very difficult times financially, and the pressure on wages, terms and conditions and support is challenging. However, mixed with this, is an acknowledgement that the older models of support and older patterns of behaviour have sometimes held people back.

There is still a perception that personalisation is about increased competition. However Choice Support and Southwark Social Services have found that the real keys to success are working together, creative thinking and open communication.

Halfway through a 4-year project great things have been achieved; we have found that working together with everyone who cares really works.

ABOUT US

Choice Support

Choice Support provides a range of support services for disabled and disadvantaged people, enabling people to take control of their lives.

It was formed in 1984 in south east London and now provide services throughout much of England to people with learning disabilities, mental health needs, physical disabilities, and homeless people. It employs around 1500 staff and provide services to 900 people, with an annual turnover of more than £40 million.

It is a not-for-profit company with charitable status, directing all of its resources toward improving its services. Increasingly it looks to people using its services to lead and inform what it does.

Choice's **Strategic Goal on Personalisation** is to deliver all Choice Support services on a personalised basis and by March 2015 that 60% of people will have individually costed support plans.

Sian Hoolahan

Sian has worked for Choice Support for 13 years in different roles. She started as a support worker and is now a project manager. She enjoys working for a person centred and innovative provider.

Sian was part of the initial working group for the Southwark personalisation project and she is currently working on setting up Choice Support Shared Lives, on personalising all our services and helping people to develop more relationships and natural support.

To find out more about this project and our other services please contact Sian Hoolahan:

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thanks to everyone who has contributed to this paper and shared information.

Steven Rose, Chief Executive of Choice Support, also adds: "Credit must go to Charan Singh, Regional Director, and his team of managers. Without their hard work, perseverance and innovation none of this would have been possible."

PUBLISHING INFORMATION

ISFs in Action © Sian Hoolahan 2012.

Designed by Henry Iles

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First published March 2012

ISBN download: 978-1-907790-26-3

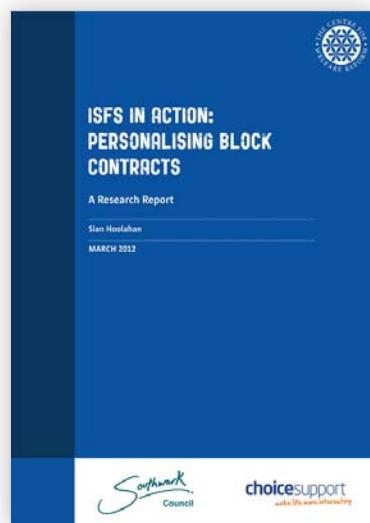
19 pp.

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ISFs in Action is published by The Centre for Welfare Reform.

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