

Case Study: The Personalisation Agenda – A Training Perspective New way of working

Derbyshire County Council

Background

The ideas of choice, control, participation and empowerment are key parts of personalisation, and they have their origins in the social model of disability, an important driver for social work practice.

In policy terms, the government sees personalisation as an agenda for other agencies as well as social services, and is central to the public sector reforms.

Part of these reforms is about ensuring that there is a highly trained and skilled workforce available to deliver the new personalisation agenda.

Being person-centred, promoting choice and control, independence, and fitting services to people rather than people to services is an approach that was first introduced for people with learning disabilities, and person-centred planning has similar aims and elements to personalisation.

Training

The learning and development section were commissioned to develop and deliver a training programme to ensure that staff are sufficiently skilled in outcome focused assessment and support planning to ensure the successful implementation of Self Directed Support at the end of 2009. The project team for Self Directed Support

identified that within Social Services training was required for the following groups of staff: social workers, care managers, occupational therapists, community care workers, lead practitioners and service managers across older adults, learning disability, physical disability and mental health services.

Model

The training was to be in two phases. Phase I was designed to be a two day, direct delivery course, examining outcome focused work and support planning. Phase II was again designed as a two day, direct delivery course looking at the technical aspects of procedures and resource allocation.

Phase I and II will be supported by a number of half day refresher workshops scheduled for immediately before the “go live” date to ensure smooth implementation.

In the future it may be possible for both the direct delivery courses and the workshops to be supported by an e-learning package to create a blended learning approach.

Challenges

The first challenge was to develop the training materials required for phase I. It was important to ensure that the materials

reflected the underlying principles of outcome focused assessment and support planning, whilst acknowledging that the fine detail of how the processes would work in practice was still evolving.

This involved reviewing information about the national agenda along with information about the local initiatives, and developing a training package appropriate to the target audience. There was consideration of people's different learning styles and to make sure that participants would have the opportunity to see how the theory could apply to practice by using appropriate exercises and case studies.

People who use the services were involved in the development of the training materials and resources and also helped deliver the training with the trainers at each event – both of which represent a good example of co-production.

There was a group of five trainers designated to deliver the training, and for the first few sessions of phase I these paired up with another trainer from the group in order to support each other to deliver this message of change.

The training involved participants working together in groups and sharing knowledge and experience. Many participants found it useful to share their experiences and concerns, and gained support from others in the session.

Barriers

Participants had a number of anxieties around the subject matter of the training. These ranged from fear of the unknown to concerns about budgets and major concerns about workers jobs. Despite these concerns, generally participants were positive about the new agenda and felt that it would be better for service users.

Evaluation

Overall more than 500 people attended phase I of the training, and these were a mixture of assessor staff, service and area managers, and other people who had an interest in the subject (e.g. quality assurance managers, some unit managers and provider managers).

Overall the training was well received by most participants. The sessions encouraged good discussions and the majority of people were able to take something away from the training and had a chance to reflect on their practice. There were some very positive comments from participants, including two people who stated that it had been an interesting course and that they were looking forward to putting it into practice.

Although over 500 people completed the training, the number of evaluation forms completed was much lower. The low number of evaluations completed prompted the training section to review the approach they take to evaluating courses, and an alternative course evaluation form has since been developed.

During both the development and delivery of the training the project team met regularly with the training manager and the training team to give updates and to receive feedback on the training.

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