

Salford and Bolton Planning Together project

Overall Purpose

The project aimed to improve the quality and availability of high quality person-centred support planning for young people labelled as having complex needs across Bolton and Salford. We did this by working together with families, frontline staff commissioners and managers to develop a shared vision of success and working together to put that vision into practice.

The project planned to work with up to 20 families in Salford and Bolton to demonstrate great planning and build our capacity to use tailored person-centred tools and techniques and help people live fulfilling lives.

What we did

The project kicked-off with two events in December, bringing people together to develop a shared understanding of what good planning looks like and a shared vision of how we can make great planning available for everyone.

On 4th December 2018, we held 2-hour sessions in Salford and the Bolton to launch the work and develop a shared understanding of what it will take to make it a great success. This was for families, staff and managers who would be participating in the project

Outcomes:

By the end of the session people will:

- Feel enthusiastic about and committed to the work
- Have a shared understanding of what's involved and what they need to commit to – that is not a passive process
- Understand what will happen next

On 13th December 2018 we held a large event for about 60 people from Bolton and Salford. It was aimed at the families who will be taking part in the project - people as well as staff working with those families and other frontline practitioners. Service managers and commissioners were also invited to attend. The aim of the event was to develop a shared understanding of best practice in support planning for everyone working with the families taking part in the project and for as many other people who are involved in planning with young people as can attend.

Outcomes:

We aimed that by the end of the session people would:

- Understand the current policies around personalisation and person-centred support
- Understand the concept of supporting people to be citizens and what this means for support planning
- Understand how to think about the whole picture of support for someone – from real wealth and community support through to personal budgets
- Learn about or re-visit some person-centred thinking tools and how to create outcomes for people that help them get the life they choose

There are video clips of some of the key concepts from these initial sessions that can be accessed from the main ‘Gloriously Ordinary Lives’ report:

- Talking about the concept of citizenship and the professional gift model versus citizenship model
- Talking about real wealth
- Talking about important to and important for
- Talking about changing the conversations we have with people

Planning together sessions

Following the December events we then hosted three live *planning together* sessions in Bolton and Salford, where we brought together the families and staff working with them to join us in developing their plans. These sessions were based on the Helen Sanderson planning live model, but with the sessions spread over 6 weeks to enable some work between sessions and some reflection by workers.

Helen Sanderson planning live - <http://helensandersonassociates.co.uk/person-centred-practice/planning-live/>

To facilitate the planning process we shared information about *Wikis* that they can use as part of the planning process to host their plan. This allows young people and their family to have an online plan which they can control and grant different types of access to for different people (e.g. read only, read and edit etc. Permissions can be further varied to restrict access to certain sections) <https://www.rixwiki.org>

Session one:

- Great things about me
- Things that are important to me and that I love
- What makes a good family life?
- What’s working and not working at the moment in our lives?

- What are our dreams and aspirations?

Homework: try something you've never tried before, using your real wealth

Session two:

- Check in – stories of what you did
- Who's in my life; people and places
- What you need to know to support me well
- Draft some outcomes and agree one solution for each

Homework: test drive some of your solutions? Or find out more about how you could make the solutions happen

Session three:

- Check in – how has it been since last time?
- Revisit outcomes – are they right? Anything to add/change?
- Agreeing solutions and who is going to do what
- Next steps from today and keeping things going

What we learned about the planning together process

- Families need to be involved from the start in planning how and when group planning happens
- Families need to be committed to the concept of planning together and to
- Not everyone feels comfortable working together in a group, over with a common format over a number of set days and not everyone can make the same times
- It is important to offer a choice of planning together or direct one-to-one work to plan with families

In both sites we struggled to get ten families signed up to the planning process. We had shared written information about the process and tried to give choices about the times sessions were held, but still only attracted five families from each site. Not all of the families came to every session and this made the idea of progressions and ongoing support to each other quite difficult.

At the first session in both sites, most families came without the young person. We thought that we had been really clear that having young people there was vital, but culturally we are used to planning without them being there, so perhaps this is understandable. Also, because we were running sessions during the day, families said they felt that they could not take young people out of school.

Families were not all in a place where they clearly wanted to plan to make changes in their lives or to think about the future.

- Professionals and families benefit from having a range of person-centred tools to hand to plan with and being confident to use them
- Having flexible or condensed sessions when we are working in a group helps keep people together
- Bringing groups of people together around young people based on who knows them best and who the person feels comfortable to work with is important
- Delegating actions to people best placed to take them forward and following them up in between sessions builds trust and keeps momentum
- Keeping it simple is vital. Using appropriate language (no jargon) and using assistive technologies where appropriate
- More emphasis needs to be placed on making sure that services understand needs rather than fitting square pegs into round holes. There needs to be a sea-change around person centred ways of working

What we learned about how the system gets in the way of good planning with young people and families

- Quite often assessment forms are too prescriptive and don't allow people to focus on an individual's needs. We don't ask the right questions, focus on everything that is wrong (deficits) and there are no opportunities to expand from a yes and no answer
- Communication between different services can be a mixed bag. Families need to know who to speak to and be signposted. Everyone needs to be in the loop
- Opinions about what's important to someone need unpicking. Sometimes they can be heavily influenced by the views and wishes of professionals and of carers and parents

Recommendations for what we need to do going forward

- Conduct an audit at six months of each of the young people and their families looking at what was different to traditional services what did it take to get it approved and did it encourage professionals to think differently
- Have regular opportunities for staff and families involved in planning to come together to share good practice, consider better ways of using resources, explore what other people are doing that works and have an opportunity to challenge where things are not person centred and where they are resource led
- Offer the chance to plan together as one of the ways of planning as part of the Year 9 review. Sessions could then be held in schools and the focus for planning centre on the 4 areas of Preparing for Adulthood – www.preparingforadulthood.org – This would also support schools and social services to work together around a family
- Make sure families know about Wikis and can use their personal budget to pay for the small annual subscription. Offer support sessions to help families use

Wikis to best effect

- Give workers and families the chance to network with other authorities to learn about what they are doing
- Make sure families and young people have access to life coaches
- All council departments create job opportunities and work experience opportunities for young disabled people
- Identify a key worker for the family who can help to move the process forward
- Create opportunities to continue to meet and work jointly together (e.g. working together to explore housing options when young people are moving on from the family home)
- Understand where young people aren't having their needs met

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