

# Person-Centred Support: a guide to person-centred working for practitioners



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We would like to thank all the service users, practitioners, managers, trainers, colleagues and friends who took part in this work and supported us to do it. Without you this Project would not have happened and this guide could not have been written. We hope this guide is useful in making person-centred support happen for all service users.

The Standards We Expect Consortium



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# Foreword

At a time of huge demands on services there is the temptation to impose top-down strategies and tools. Too often the voices and experiences of service users and those that support them day-by-day are lost in this process.

This guide is a very useful document for those working day-to-day with people who need support. It values practitioners' perspectives and is both supportive and challenging. It offers useful practical pointers for person-centred practice without being simplistic or prescriptive. There are actions included that all practitioners can do, whatever their role or organisation and whether their management is person-centred or not.

The fact that this document is firmly based in national research and the social model of disability is a great plus. The practical pointers come out of the combined experience of practitioners around the country. The guide itself is easy to read and use, a straightforward read full of food for thought and action. I commend it to all practitioners and students.

**Moira Gibb** Chief Executive, Camden Borough Council and Chair of the Social Work Reform Board

This guide is an invaluable tool for anyone working with service users from whatever cultural or religious background. It reinforces the importance of the core values of respect, inclusion, independence and choice for service users.

All too often, assumptions are made about what is best practice. This guide lays out in plain English the rights of practitioners to access suitable training in order to be person-centred and the rights of the service user to decide his or her support needs and to have control over their lives. The guide's balance of information and advice in an accessible manner is refreshing, when such topics tend to be dealt with in a cold and clinical manner. I have no doubt that practitioners will find this guide to be an empowering tool which they can use to improve their abilities to be person-centred.

The quotes from practitioners show that there are many who feel frustrated at their inability to be person-centred. This guide offers clear and concise advice on how to go about bridging this gap. Too often, person-centred support gets put to the back of the queue behind the perceived necessity to meet targets and deadlines. This guide does an excellent job of focusing attention on the importance of being person-centred.

As one practitioner says, "...treat other people how you would like to be treated yourself...". Clearly obstacles do exist that may prevent practitioners from implementing this ethos to its fullest but I believe this guide will go a long way to eliminating many of these barriers and will empower practitioners to be person-centred at all times.

**Tariq Khaliq** Advocacy Development Worker, Apna Group



# Introduction

Practitioners are a vital element in social care and play an important role in the provision of person-centred support. This guide is for practitioners in social care services who want to work in a more person-centred way and develop person-centred support in their practice.

We know from the Standards We Expect Project that many practitioners are very keen to work in ways that support service users to live their lives in the way they want. From the other perspective, lots of service users told us that

practitioners can be very helpful to them. But many practitioners feel they did not always get the support and training they need from their managers and the organisations in which they work to be able to fully achieve person-centred working.

We have therefore put together this guide and hope that by sharing some useful information with you it will help you work in the way that people involved in the Standards We Expect Project have said is the most helpful.





### Who is a ‘practitioner’

The Standards We Expect Project chose to use the generic term ‘practitioner’. This includes all workers who provide face-to-face support to service users on a daily basis (but are not managers) employed by statutory, private or voluntary organisations. This includes social workers, care managers, care staff, nurses, those who work in residential homes and community based workers.

### More about the Standards We Expect Project

The Standards We Expect Project was a research and development project funded by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation between 2006 and 2010. The Project worked closely in eight partner sites across the UK and had links with twelve other sites. It included the perspectives of service users and practitioners, two under-represented groups in social care research, as well as service managers.

The partner services ranged from residential to outreach services, and from services for young adults to older people. Some people using the services had learning difficulties; others had physical impairments or dementia; others were using end-of-life care or services for homeless people.

The aim of the Project was to support the development of better person-centred services in the eight local areas. It looked at the systems and processes which support service users to have choice and control over how their rights and needs are met. The Project also involved service users, carers, staff and organisations in having a say about services and making things change for the better.

Particular attention was paid to supporting the involvement of service users in the Project, people who are often excluded from these discussions. However a very important part of the Project also involved meeting with practitioners whose voice is also seldom heard in debates and policies about service development.

Much of the work was conducted individually in partner services but the Project also ran national meetings and training sessions.

The Project was led by Shaping Our Lives, an independent, national, service-user-led organisation. The three other partners were Values Into Action, The Centre for Social Action at De Montfort University and the Centre for Citizen Participation at Brunel University. The Project’s consortium also included four individuals representing a range of perspectives and skills, including a social work practitioner, a university lecturer, an individual from the Race Equality Unit and a person with experience of working with older people around person-centred support.

In addition to the eight partner sites, the Project worked with a network of twelve more organisations, providing an opportunity to take part in shared learning and discussion at two national get-togethers. These events involved bringing together service users, practitioners and managers from all the participating organisations to give them the opportunity to talk about what person-centred services are and how we can all work together to make them happen.

As well as the get-togethers, the Project ran training for service users, practitioners and managers around person-centred support.

# The context for person-centred support

Person-centred support means the service user is at the centre of a service. Services should work with the service user to help them live the life they want. It is not about the service user fitting into the existing service and just accepting what is on offer because there is nothing else available.

Many participants in our project spoke of person-centred support as a way of thinking or something that comes from the heart. They said it is an approach rather than a list of procedures or techniques. They suggested that person-centred support can only exist in a sustained and effective manner when it is underpinned by certain core values such as inclusion, respect, independence and personal choice. It was also agreed that person-centred support is a way of working based on beliefs about the rights of service users and underlying values, rather than a buzz-term or a government policy.

It’s not another job, it’s **the** job. Person-centred support is not another thing that you have got to do, it is what you have got to do.

**Practitioner**

# The eight key issues

Our project identified eight key issues in relation to person-centred support:

## Choice and control

This means people being in charge of their lives and having support to make decisions.

## Setting goals

This means enabling service users to decide what they want to do with their lives.

## Good relationships

It is extremely important to service users to have good relationships with family members, friends, the people who work with them and others. Practitioners have a valuable role to play in helping to make this happen and enabling service users to feel part of their community.

## Listening

Service providers, and practitioners, need to listen to service users to make person-centred support happen.

## Information

Service users need the right information given in an accessible form. It can be very difficult to make good choices without it.

## Being positive

Service users need support to look at their strengths and what they can do, rather than a focus on what they can't do. People can often make better choices if they feel positive about themselves.

## Learning

Person-centred support can give service users the confidence to go out and try new activities and learn new skills.

## Flexibility

Person-centred support is crucially about services being flexible enough to fit into people's lives. It is not about a 'one size fits all' service or giving everyone exactly the same service.

## The social model of disability

Over the last 30 years disabled people have come together to fight for rights and equality. They have started their own organisations to support each other and campaign for change.

An important part of this campaign is the development of the social model of disability.

The traditional view of disability is often called 'the medical model of disability'. It views disabled people as having medical problems, and the assumption is that there will be many things they cannot do. The social model of disability starts from a very different perspective. It looks at the way society, and its structures, systems and organisations, make disabled people's lives difficult. It starts from the premise that everyone is equal and shows that it is society that puts up barriers that prevent the inclusion of disabled people and restricts their rights and opportunities. These are barriers like poor access to buildings, lack of access to public transport, or failing to provide the right services and support so that people can't participate in school, college or a working life.

Looking at disability this way challenges the idea that disability is about what people cannot do because of their condition or impairment. It lifts the blame from the individual and makes it clear that the blame lies with a society that does not provide the support and services needed. This is also called 'an equalities approach' because it is about disabled people having the same life chances and opportunities as everyone else. The social model of disability is part of a challenge to society to remove the barriers that prevent the full participation of disabled people.

The Standards We Expect Project looked at services from this 'barriers and equalities' approach and so for us person-centred services are about helping people to live their lives as full members of society. To do this they need to have choice and control over the support they get. It is therefore extremely important that practitioners who want to work in a person-centred way have an understanding of the social model of disability.

We have listed some useful organisations at the end of this guide where you can learn more about the social model of disability.

## Recognising people's rights in law

People's rights are not just a matter of opinion but are also enshrined in law. There are a number of recent laws which are useful to know about.

## The Mental Capacity Act

The Mental Capacity Act (2005) is a law about people's right to make their own choices and decisions, to have 'self determination'.

It has five key principles:

1. Assume a person has capacity unless proved otherwise.
2. Do not treat people as incapable of making a decision unless all practicable steps have been tried to help them.
3. A person should not be treated as incapable of making a decision because their decision may seem unwise.
4. Always take decisions for people without capacity in their best interests.
5. A best interests decision made on someone's behalf must be one that is least restrictive of their rights and freedom.

The law makes clear that no one should assume that a person cannot make a decision based on:

- their age
- how they look
- how they behave
- if they can't make major decisions
- if they were unable to make a decision in the past.

## The Disability Discrimination Act

The Disability Discrimination Act (1995) states that people should not be treated unfairly because they are disabled. The law is about access and services in:

- shops and services
- health and social care
- school and college
- employment
- housing.

Employers and organisations that provide any kinds of goods and services are breaking the law if they treat disabled people in a different way to other people because of their impairment or disability.

Services must make ‘reasonable adjustments’ to make something accessible or easier for disabled people to use. This might cover things like:

- flexible working hours for disabled staff
- providing disability awareness training for staff
- putting in a ramp to make a building accessible
- providing an interpreter for deaf people.

All public organisations, like councils, colleges and public transport services must have a policy that says what they will do to ensure disabled people have equal access to their services.

### The Equality Act

The Equality Act is a new law in the UK which came into force on 1 October 2010. The Equality Act brings together all UK laws about inequality and discrimination.

The Equality Act says that public organisations and those undertaking services have to take action to make things equal for the people who work for them and for those who use their services. The Equality Act talks about rights for those who may experience direct and indirect discrimination, harassment and victimisation and responsibilities on organisations to prevent and challenge such discrimination.

The Equality Act says that people who fall into the following categories (in the language of the Act, people who have a ‘protected characteristic’) must not be discriminated against. The protected characteristics are:

- age
- disability
- gender reassignment (the definition includes all transgendered people)
- marriage and civil partnership
- pregnancy and maternity
- race
- religion and belief
- sex
- sexual orientation.

The Equality Act also includes the Public Sector Equality Duty. The Duty says that service organisations, amongst others, must:

- make sure discrimination, harassment and victimisation do not happen.
- take positive action so there is more equal opportunity for everyone.
- do their best to help everyone get on better.

### Personalised services

In 2007 a government vision and strategy for services, *Putting People First*, stated a commitment to giving people more independence, choice and control through high-quality personalised services. The view of this strategy was that people should be able to use resources more flexibly to suit their needs and lifestyle. It recognised that a wide range of services – from transport, leisure, education, health, housing, community safety and criminal justice – all need to be involved in improving people’s independence and quality of life. *Putting People First* stated that the success of this approach would be seen in improved social inclusion, empowerment and equality for people who use services.

## The Human Rights Act

The Human Rights Act (1998) gives everyone rights as human beings. It puts these rights under headings called ‘Articles’, including:

### Article 2 The right to life

Everyone has the right not to be killed and to have his or her life protected. This covers protection from hate crime.

### Article 3 The right not to be treated in cruel, inhuman or degrading ways

Services and support staff must work with people in ways that respect their dignity and humanity.

### Article 5 The right to freedom and to be safe

Services should not unlawfully restrict service users’ freedom and should act against bullying or hate crime.

### Article 8 The right to respect for private and family life

People have the right to live in the same way as everyone else in the community. This is an important right for disabled people who are sometimes only offered housing and services with groups of other disabled people. It also covers the right to marry, the right to support to be a parent, and the right to access your local community.

### Article 9 The right to have a religion and to have your own ideas

Everyone has the right to follow their own beliefs and have their own ideas, as long as this does not restrict someone else’s rights to enjoy their own freedoms.

### Article 10 The right to say what you think

Everyone has the right to speak out, even if other people disagree with them, as long as this does not restrict someone else’s rights to enjoy their own freedoms.

### Article 11 The right to freedom of association

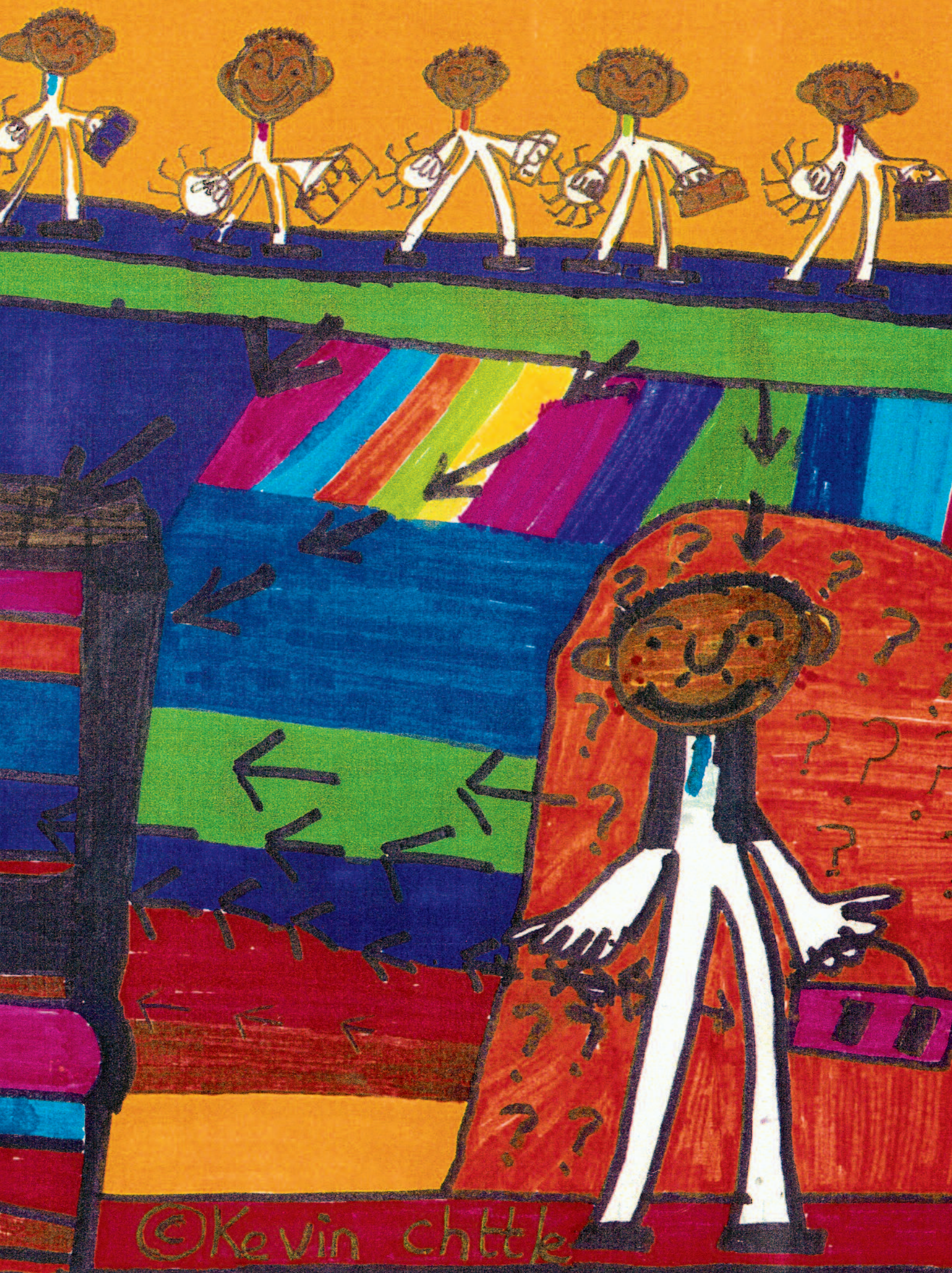
Services should not stop people from going out and meeting other people.

### Article 14 The right not to be discriminated against

Service users have the right not to be treated badly because of being a woman or a man, black or white, having a disability or for any other reason.

The Human Rights Act also says people have the right to keep and enjoy their own things (Protocol 1, Article 1) and the right to education (Protocol 1, Article 2).





# What practitioners need to be able to provide person-centred support

It is very important that practitioners receive appropriate support and training. You are entitled to ask for this in your work.

There are standards for the registration and inspection of social care services, most significantly in the National Care Standards Act (2000). These standards include the training and supervision of social care workers. For example the National Minimum Standards Regulations for Domiciliary Care state that:

Newly appointed care or support workers delivering personal care who do not already hold a relevant care qualification are required to demonstrate their competence and register for the relevant NVQ in care award (either NVQ in Care level 2 or level 3) within the first six months of employment and complete the full award within three years.

On the subject of supervision they say:

All staff meet formally on a one-to-one basis with their line manager to discuss their work at least three monthly and written records kept on the content and outcome of each meeting.



## Support and training for practitioners

The standard for supervision set out in the National Minimum Standards Regulations for Care Homes for Adults (18-65) says that supervision should happen at least six times a year.

Many participants in The Standards We Expect Project spoke about the importance of training for social care practitioners. Although many practitioners felt they received good general training there were a small number who felt they did not get enough training and that this affected the services they worked for.

We have identified the key points that were raised about the issue of training and support for service workers. They are:

- Practitioners need to have particular skills and knowledge when working with particular groups of service users, for example people with dementia or people approaching the end of life.
- Training for practitioners has a positive impact on the rest of the organisation. It enables workers to treat service users with more dignity and respect.
- Services must be prepared to commit resources to staff training and offer training at times that are suitable for staff. This approach to training shows a commitment to the quality of service and demonstrates the service values its workforce.
- Involving service users as trainers is highly valued by practitioners and service users themselves. It leads to closer and more equal relationships between practitioners and service users.
- It is important to encourage reflective practice, for better individual work and for a better service overall. Practitioners' opinions are also valuable in improving services.
- Supervision needs to be offered on a regular and frequent basis to practitioners. This enables practitioners to cope with the emotional demands of their work as well as offering the opportunities to reflect on their work and feed into service development.

## The characteristics of a person-centred service

From the opinions of people involved in our research it is possible to identify the following characteristics of a service that supports and values practitioners so as to enable them to provide a person-centred service:

1. Regular supervision.
2. Regular team meetings.
3. An open and supportive atmosphere at meetings where people feel able to express views and ideas.
4. Valuing contributions from the whole team, irrespective of length of service or seniority.
5. Practitioners' ideas being listened to, taken seriously and acted upon by the service.
6. A down to earth, approachable management style.
7. Practitioners empowered to make decisions within agreed boundaries.
8. Early and open communication about important changes within a service
9. Effective training, including that led by and/or involving service users.

There are overlaps in what service users identified as key components for person-centred support and what practitioners need from their organisations in order to be able to work well and deliver person-centred support. Listening, involvement, being empowered to make decisions and being supported are common to both groups involved in our research.

# Making it happen

In our project it was clear that service users valued the role that practitioners can play in helping them achieve control in their lives. There was widespread agreement among participants that the quality of relationships between service users and practitioners is the key building block in establishing person-centred support.

Many practitioners expressed real commitment to making this happen and working in equal ways with service users. So what elements might make up a person-centred way of working? The following list is based on what participants said to us.

There are people outside, whatever branch of care and medicine or whatever it is you are in, who feel outside and have great needs and don't know how to have those needs met. Yes, those who are trying to offer the needs can do all sorts of things, it is something to do with encouragement, affirmation, and you are probably going along that road and when you get to that point they will feel affirmed and empowered to come on board. **Practitioner**



You start life as a person and you should end life as a person and at the end of life you often end up as somebody who is having things done to them. No matter how physically disabled a person may be, they are still independent in their own head but they are not often viewed as that. They are viewed as something to be done to or at and for me it is about, I am in control of my life now and no matter how disabled I become, I still want to be in control of my life. For me it is about my control and that is how we will get person-centred care because I will be in charge of it not somebody else. **Service user**

### **Treat people as individuals**

It is very important to see service users as individuals, as whole people with their own strengths and not as a set of problems. Practitioners must have a desire to understand the connections in people's lives and seek to act on, rather than ignore, the constraints and discrimination they may experience in society. This includes recognising and respecting difference and diversity and understanding that service users from black and minority ethnic communities may face specific discrimination and difficulties in the wider society.

This personalisation of services enables creativity and the search for individual solutions. It helps tailor services to an individual's goals and interests. The process helps service users to feel more in control and more confident in themselves. This is a basis for future learning and decision making as part of a more independent life.

### **The quality of relationships**

Service users can feel alienated and disempowered by services that are not person-centred and which they have not had the opportunity to build good relationships with. One practitioner explained that this is a challenge to services that is best met by encouragement and building relationships:

"It has made me consider more the importance of relationship-centred as much as person-centred ... If you don't have a good working relationship you don't get the best out of it, unless it's relationship-centred the person-centred bit doesn't work. ... When you pull right back to the bones of it, it is often the relationship the staff have with an individual that makes a difference, that is the good quality stuff and that is really difficult to pin down." **Manager**

Many service users also emphasised the importance of being listened to, of having your views and perspectives respected. Although service users wanted their important relationships to be recognised, they also wanted practitioners to listen to them first, rather than family members:

"I think the relationship thing is key isn't it because there are a lot of service users who we work with who haven't got verbal communication and can't voice their opinions and we are having to best guess what they want and that is a real challenge but it still is possible to build relationships." **Speaker unknown**

### **Know and understand people's rights**

It is very important to recognise the rights service users have to make their own decisions and to be supported in that. Practitioners have a vital role in ensuring that service users have the same rights to lead their lives as the rest of society. Sadly, in our project we found that some service users had their rights restricted in very basic ways, such as not being able to go out when they wanted or not being allowed to choose how to spend their money.

Where I work with people, sometimes they don't realise their own ability and then suddenly they find something coming up, I don't know, maybe like writing or drawing or painting and then they discover for themselves naturally that they do have a talent or a strength that they never recognised before. That gives them confidence. **Manager**

### **Don't make assumptions**

A large number of service users spoke about other people (particularly practitioners) making assumptions about what they want and what they can do. They said that these assumptions could make it hard for them to get the things they want. Service users who did not feel confident to speak up or who experienced difficulties with communication were particularly badly affected. Other people's assumptions adversely affected both simple, everyday aspects of service users' daily lives and major life decisions.

### **Take a positive approach**

Taking a person-centred approach also means taking a positive approach, which supports service users to make choices and work towards goals.

### **A culture change from care to support**

A key part of working in person-centred ways is promoting choices and developing independence. This means adopting a different approach towards work, one based on support rather than care.

An example of this might be the difference between a service user being in the kitchen and involved in preparing a meal as opposed to the practitioner cooking a meal for the service user. Or a service user choosing what to eat and when, even if they can't or don't want to cook, rather than being given no choice over meals.



This approach is applicable to all groups of services users, not just those perceived as the most able. People with higher support needs should be actively involved in both decision-making and practical tasks:

“So it’s getting that culture change from the carer to support worker working in a completely different way. So it’s looking at the whole cultural values of enabling people rather than doing for people ... So we’re actually currently undertaking a lot of training for more service users and carers and we’re looking at people doing training together as well.” **Speaker unknown**

#### **Actions not words!**

Many service users, practitioners and managers were greatly concerned about the use (and abuse) of language and terminology in social care. There was a strong feeling that terms coined by the disability movement are appropriated by services for their own ends. Some service users said that services adopt this language to appear

more person-centred but that they lack the underlying values and approach to really put things like ‘inclusion’ or ‘personal choice’ into action. Participants were clear that merely adopting the terminology of person-centred support will not result in services that are genuinely personalised.

#### **Have the right attitude and approach**

When service users don’t like their support it can be because practitioners work in ways that promote their own convenience rather than in ways that suit service users. They valued practitioners who helped them become independent, who didn’t do things *for* them, but rather *with* them, enabling them to build up confidence and experience.

#### **See it as ‘a work in progress’**

A number of services felt that the process of being person-centred was an ongoing part of the work of services and their managers and practitioners. It was described as a ‘cycle of learning’, which aims to constantly assess and improve how services are meeting the needs and aspirations of service users.

As a team we accept we will always be a work in progress, we will always be halfway up that hill. We are moving on and keep learning. **Manager**

## Dealing with problems

We realise that it is not always easy for practitioners to feel they can work in a person-centred way in the organisation in which they are employed. Generally, we were struck by the high level of commitment shown by practitioners. Although practitioners are often not well paid it was noticeable that few of those we spoke to even commented on their low pay. (This is not an argument for not pressing for better pay for practitioners!) However there were some common barriers and themes to person-centred working that practitioners identified.

We have called this ‘I want to be person-centred in my work but...’

[But it is a barrier] if you don’t get the chance to have that relationship with someone, to build up knowledge and a relationship. I was thinking about it and that is where the first barrier is, I think. **Practitioner**



# I want to be person-centred in my work but...

## **My organisation is not person-centred...**

The service users we spoke to talked about how much they valued the practitioners who were prepared to treat them as individuals and to respect their ability to make choices and decisions. It is possible to change your own attitudes and approach even if it does not reflect that of the organisation you work for.

## **I'd like to do it but my managers won't support me...**

As above, you are in charge of how you personally relate to the people you work with. Even if you are not given more time or resources, you can treat people as individuals, respect their rights and communicate well. You also have legal and moral duties to challenge bad practice in your organisation. You can make sure you know about people rights, so that you can pass the information on and challenge when you see people's rights being ignored or abused. Find out about local and national organisations led by disabled people and/or service users and help service users to network with others. Join with staff networks, coalitions and/or unions to work together for better services.

## **The people I work with can't make choices...**

One of the really important values underpinning person-centred working is an understanding that everyone has the right to make choices and have their preferences respected, even if others make decisions on their behalf. This is a legal requirement under the Mental Capacity Act 2005. It may be that some people need more support and information than others to make those choices and may need people on their side to represent those choices to decision-makers in services. Remember that the principle of self-autonomy and people's right to make choices is also enshrined in law (the Mental Capacity Act 2005). The Act contains clear procedures about what should happen if someone cannot make a particular choice for themselves.

## **I don't have the right information to advise people...**

There are ways of getting that information. This guide tells you about some rights in law. You can follow this up by looking at the list of useful information at the end of the guide. You can find out about local services and organisations from

your local authority or Council for Voluntary Service. You can search on the internet for a lot of information. You can join – or encourage the people you work with to join – national networks like Shaping Our Lives and People First.

## **I haven't had any training about how to do it...**

As we have already said in this guide, all practitioners have a right to training. The Government has set standards for the registration and inspection of social care services, which include the training and supervision of social care workers. However remember what service users said to us: that person-centred working is not just about training but about an approach that is based on clear values of inclusion, respect, independence and personal choice. It is not just about learning a set of techniques. Don't wait for the training course to start doing it!

## **It's one more initiative and I don't have the time...**

A person-centred approach is not about learning a set of procedures and approaches that includes a lot of bureaucracy or paper work. Person-centred working is about the way you approach the service users with whom you are working. It has a clear values base including recognising people's rights to equality and inclusion in our society and an understanding of the support they may need to achieve this. Training and resources

can help but person-centred working can happen without anything more than a service user and a practitioner spending time together.

## **We're not allowed to be flexible and help people take risks...**

Organisations can be hyper-sensitive about 'risk', enforcing over-the-top risk assessments and procedures that limit service users' rights to choice and control. Find out more about the Government's personalisation agenda. This recognises that risk is a part of people's lives. Also make sure you know how the Mental Capacity Act supports people's right to make choices, even if others think these are unwise.

## **The people/families/communities I work with don't want people to be in control of their service...**

There are often a range of viewpoints about the choices a service user makes about their life. Some families feel very protective of their family member, some have bad experiences of being left to pick up the pieces when services fail or withdraw. Family members don't always agree amongst themselves about someone's service and there can be many vested interests and differences of opinion. This is a tricky area to negotiate. Your job must be to support the individual service user and take a lead from them about how they want their family involved or not in their service.

It is a process of really spending time with people and really getting a feel, because quite often the people that I work with don't know how to make choices and when faced with a choice it is quite bewildering to actually suddenly have to make a decision. It can be a long, long process. **Speaker unknown**

Quite often families will intervene on behalf of a person and say 'what they really want is', and be quite prescriptive in what they really want and it is about, I guess, giving people the courage really to just, you know, to have a bit of space and think about what they would really like for themselves and to have people to actually just voice that and them being able to advocate. I think that person feels that they are not able to actually say it for themselves, and about making sure that you are advocating clearly what that person's wishes are rather than anyone else's opinion. **Speaker unknown**



### The people I work with like their service as it is...

This is often an argument made when people are afraid of change. It can be difficult for all of us, at times, to accept when changes need to be made. But it's important to recognise that service users may well appear to like their service if they have no information about what else might be available, or how things work in other services and organisations or if they have not met other service users who might be living more independently. It can also be difficult for service users, who depend on the support offered by staff, to say to those same staff that they do not like the service they get. You need to keep on presenting options and supporting service users to explore alternatives and meet people who have made different choices. You can also support service users to join organisations led by their peers.

### There's not much choice around here...

It may be helpful to support service users in taking small choices in the beginning. Perhaps your service does seem very set in its ways, but it is possible to start working with service users to think about choices they can make in their daily lives and supporting them to do some things differently. It may be as simple as what they want to wear in the morning or when they want their next cup of tea. The personalisation agenda now enables people to have more control over the money allocated to their support so they can design their own provision, if there is nothing they

like locally. Some service users are getting together to pool their money to set up new provision to meet their needs in the way they want.

### We tried it and it didn't work...

Person-centred support isn't a 'thing' that you do once and then give up on. It's a philosophy, a way of working. If one thing doesn't work, try something else. Person-centred support is about services responding to individuals. There are no rules to say a service has to look one way or the other.

### I don't know how to start...

Start by thinking how you would like to be treated and respected if you were a service user. Go from there. You don't need a badge or a certificate. Listen to each individual service user. You don't have to stop being you and you don't have to do the same thing with each person. Person-centred support is an approach, put into concrete action. You could also join up with others through some of the organisations at the end of this guide, to share and learn together.

### I feel like I'm the only one wanting to be person-centred...

Be the only one and be proud of it! Then join with others, network, and make links with people in other services or areas. Find allies at all levels, in all ways and find ways to change things. Become a good source of information, a good networker. Don't give up. There are lots of you out there! You can make a difference!

Each and every resident we know inside out, or you should know inside out, their likes their dislikes, their little ways, we have all got our little ways. And when I am teaching the carers, when I get a new carer, the first thing I say to them is you treat your resident male or female as if they were your own grandmother or grandfather, mother or father. And you treat other people how you would like to be treated yourself and don't forget they are all individuals and they have all got individual tastes, likes, dislikes, little habits. And we have got to get to know these and that is what we like to do, or are aiming to do. **Practitioner**

## You can make a difference

Many of the practitioners we met during the Standards We Expect Project went out of their way to work in person-centred ways in their organisations. However, it is easy to feel discouraged and overwhelmed by the systems and structures of organisations and by lack of time, resources and management support.

There are two main messages from all the views and ideas in this guide:

1. Services users recognise the crucial role of support workers in providing person-centred support. Service users want and appreciate support workers who treat them with dignity and respect, promote their rights, listen, and build a relationship based on trust and humanity.
2. You have a choice about putting the above things – so valued by service users – into practice. Time, resources and supportive management are all important but you can choose to do your work with humanity and respect. You can choose to inform yourself about people's rights and to pass on that information. You can choose to listen, trust and promote service users' choices.

Of course, it is not easy but it is possible. So, do something today, however small, towards working in a person-centred way.

## It does make a difference!





# Useful organisations

## Government departments

**Department of Constitutional Affairs**  
Mental Capacity Implementation Team  
5<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Steel House  
11 Tothill Street  
London SW1H 9LH  
Telephone: 020 7210 0037  
Email: [makingdecisions@dca.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:makingdecisions@dca.gsi.gov.uk)  
[www.dca.gov.uk](http://www.dca.gov.uk)

**Department of Health**  
This website includes a list of all local Independent Mental Capacity Advocate (IMCA) services.  
For more information about what an IMCA is and a list of all IMCA services across the country, contact:  
[www.dh.gov.uk/mca](http://www.dh.gov.uk/mca)

## Equality commissions

**The Equality and Human Rights Commission**  
Equality and Human Rights Commission (**England**)  
Freepost RRL-LGHUX-CTR  
Arndale House  
Arndale Centre  
Manchester M4 3EQ  
Telephone: 0845 604 6610  
Textphone: 0845 604 6620  
Fax: 0845 604 6630  
[www.equalityhumanrights.com](http://www.equalityhumanrights.com)

Equality and Human Rights Commission (**Wales**)  
Freepost RRLR-UEYB-UYZL  
1st Floor, 3 Callaghan Square  
Cardiff CF10 5BT  
Telephone: 0845 604 8810  
Textphone: 0845 604 8820

Equality and Human Rights Commission (**Scotland**)  
Freepost RRL-LGYLB-UJTA  
The Optima Building  
58 Robertson Street  
Glasgow G2 8DU  
Telephone: 0845 604 5510  
Textphone: 0845 604 5520

## National service user and disabled people's organisations

**Shaping Our Lives**  
National User Network  
BM Box 4845  
London WC1N 3XX  
Telephone: 0845 241 0383  
[www.shapingourlives.org.uk](http://www.shapingourlives.org.uk)

**SOLNET website of organisations of people**  
[www.solnetwork.org.uk](http://www.solnetwork.org.uk)

**National Centre for Independent Living**  
Unit 3.40  
Canterbury Court  
1-3 Brixton Road  
London SW9 6DE  
Telephone: 020 7587 1663  
Advice Line: 0845 026 4748

**Self advocacy**  
To find your local self advocacy group you can go to the website of the National Forum:  
[www.nationalforum.co.uk](http://www.nationalforum.co.uk)

**People First**  
A self advocacy organisation run by people with learning difficulties based in London is:  
[www.people-first.co.uk](http://www.people-first.co.uk)

## Other national organisations

**Action for Advocacy**  
PO Box 31856  
Lorimore Square  
London SE17 3XR  
Telephone: 020 7820 7868  
[www.actionforadvocacy.org.uk](http://www.actionforadvocacy.org.uk)

**Housing Options**  
Stanelaw House  
Sutton Lane  
Witney  
Oxfordshire OX29 5RY  
Telephone: (0845) 456 1497  
[www.housingoptions.org.uk](http://www.housingoptions.org.uk)

**National Association of Citizen Advice Bureaux**  
[www.nacab.org.uk](http://www.nacab.org.uk)  
[www.adviceguide.org.uk](http://www.adviceguide.org.uk)

**National Association for Voluntary and Community Action**  
The Tower  
2 Furnival Square  
Sheffield S1 4QL  
Telephone: 0114 278 6636  
Textphone: 0114 278 7025  
[www.navca.org.uk](http://www.navca.org.uk)

**National Brokerage Network**  
3 The Courtyard  
Windhill  
Bishops Stortford  
Herts CM23 2ND  
Telephone: 01279 504735  
[www.nationalbrokeragenetwork.org.uk](http://www.nationalbrokeragenetwork.org.uk)

**Social Care Institute for Excellence**  
Goldings House  
2 Hay's Lane  
London SE1 2HB  
Telephone: 020 7089 6840  
Textphone: 020 7089 6893  
[www.scie.org.uk](http://www.scie.org.uk)

**Values Into Action**  
PO Box 59043  
London E13 3AZ  
Telephone: 07754 157718  
[www.viauk.org](http://www.viauk.org)



# Reports from the Project

The Standards We Expect Project has produced a range of documents about person-centred support written for a variety of people on a variety of topics.

You can find out how to get a hard copy or download a copy from these websites:

**[www.shapingourlives.org.uk](http://www.shapingourlives.org.uk)**  
**[www.policypress.co.uk](http://www.policypress.co.uk)**

The website will also tell you how to get Word copies of the documents which can be downloaded for use with computer readers or in large font versions.

## **Supporting People: towards a person-centred approach**

Peter Beresford, Jennie Fleming, Michael Glynn, Catherine Bewley, Fran Branfield, Suzy Croft, Karen Postle

Published by Policy Press 2011

## **Supporting People: towards a person-centred approach Findings**

Peter Beresford, Jennie Fleming, Michael Glynn, Catherine Bewley, Fran Branfield, Suzy Croft, Karen Postle

Published by Joseph Rowntree Foundation 2011

## **Supporting People: the big issues**

Peter Beresford, Jennie Fleming, Michael Glynn, Catherine Bewley, Fran Branfield, Suzy Croft, Karen Postle

Published by Joseph Rowntree Foundation 2011

## **Supporting People: a summary in easy words and pictures**

Gina Barrett, Maggie Brennan, Dana Brown, Neil Burton, Wenda Gordons and Christina Watkins from People First Lambeth with Hom Saihkay and Catherine Bewley

## **Person-Centred Support: a guide for service users**

Catherine Bewley, Fran Branfield, Michael Glynn, Peter Beresford, Suzy Croft, Jennie Fleming, Karen Postle

## **Person-Centred Support: a guide to person-centred working for practitioners**

Suzy Croft, Catherine Bewley, Peter Beresford, Fran Branfield, Jennie Fleming, Michael Glynn, Karen Postle

## **Making a Change: a guide to running successful and accessible workshops and training**

Michael Glynn, Fran Branfield, Catherine Bewley, Suzy Croft, Jennie Fleming, Karen Postle

## **Person-Centred Support: choices for end of life care**

Jennie Fleming, Michael Glynn, Rod Griffin, Peter Beresford, Catherine Bewley, Fran Branfield, Suzy Croft, Karen Postle

## **Working towards Person-Centred Support: a local case study**

Karen Postle, Suzy Croft, Jennie Fleming, Peter Beresford, Catherine Bewley, Fran Branfield, Michael Glynn

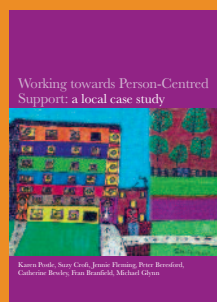
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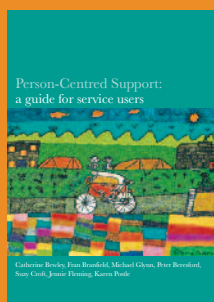
Front cover illustration 'Patients and staff put down by the bosses' © Kevin Chettle and with permission from Advocacy in Action

This report is one of a series linked with the national Standards We Expect Project supported by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation. The purpose of this national project was to develop person-centred support in social care and other services, in line with the 'standards' that service users wanted. It focused particularly on including the views and experience of people as service users, informal carers and face-to-face practitioners. The aim was to find out what barriers were getting in the way of disabled people and service users having the services and support they wanted and how these barriers could be overcome.

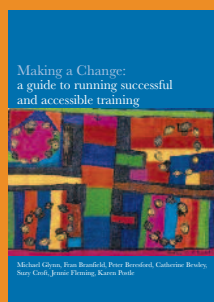
## Also available:



Working towards  
Person-Centred Support:  
a local case study



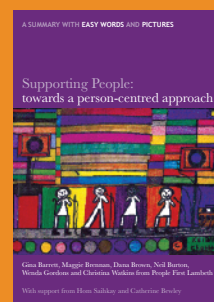
Person-Centred Support:  
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