

## The wider benefits and added value for Strategic Commissioning from the Nottingham City Micro Market Development Project

### Introduction

At the outset of the Nottingham City Micro Market Development Project the social care strategic commissioning section of the council had little notion of the extent of the current micro market. It had only an embryonic idea of what the practical steps and job tasks of workers engaged in active market development might be and the council had no developed mapping of what the self directed care market could or should look like beyond the mechanics of social care assessment and resource allocation processes.

The successful implementation of this Project led by Tracy Turner as Coordinator in Nottingham and backed up by the expertise and information networks of Community Catalysts under the overall guidance of Angela Catley has resulted in an intensive surge of new learning for the social care commissioning arm of Nottingham City Council. The project has had a profound effect on our understanding of not only the Micro Market and how to support it but also of the wider scale market mapping of what the council needs to do to support the larger self directed care market as well.

### Market Support

The project has given the council specific learning on :

- A detailed understanding of the profile and job specification of a micro co-ordinator and of the supervisory and support mechanisms that worker will require and by extension an understanding of the corresponding job specifications for macro and SME providers as well. It has helped us understand that these are new types of worker who need to bring need flexible ways of working and a strong element of “new ways of thinking” to make this role a success.
- An understanding of the creativity and innovation that needs to be fostered and encouraged to make a success of market management in direct interface with providers
- The range of connections between stakeholders and partners that worker needs to build.
- The need for market coordinators to adapt and be flexible to varying markets and to be allowed a degree of independence and judgement to manage the

range of dilemmas posed by agencies that might be in competition and also which need to work in concert within market systems.

### Providers

The project has significantly developed the council's understanding of the multiplicity and range of potential micro providers and how these providers interrelate and the sort of support they might require. The Project has contributed to:

- Learning about the need for centralised information sources for providers
- Critical analysis of current online directories
- Learning that micros range widely in their business development and that their support needs to be individualised
- Identifying the need for a forum/steering group in order to grow development and capture market feed back
- Identifying how some niche providers may be helped to be linked up together to form business alliances.
- Identifying the barriers that block micro development
- Helping micro providers to self-analyse and link to new opportunities
- Helping us understand that it is important to understand what micro services are required to be regulated by the CQC and those which are not, and also the importance of understanding that purchasable support is not the only business criteria for micros – there may be a range of other community activity they undertake which contributes to the council's aims.

### Market Systems

The project has really contributed to our understanding of what we need to do to build our self directed market and it has had significant impact on how Strategic Commissioning will continue to support, value and build information feedback in the market. In particular:

- The project has helped us advance how we will Value Mark services

- How we will support Brokerage and Employment Support and Individual Service Funds in particular and generally it has helped the council define what is the “Nottingham offer” for support to the self directed market. It has helped us draw out a map of the Putting People First market system in Nottingham when none existed before.
- It has helped us understand that there are emergent “markets within markets” ie the business support market to micros.
- It has helped build the social enterprise and community capacity aspect of micros and to link up with the business development and leisure and sports segments of the council who have not previously been connected to social care commissioning.
- Practical suggestions about how commissioning can link to the market – ie “Can’t find what You’re Looking For?” web portal.
- It has shown that the innate creativity of the market will evolve its own solutions to issues that face providers.

### Vision

The project with its accompanying strengthened linkage to national developments via NAAPS and to the Community Catalyst’s DH pilot work on a Quality Mark approach for micro providers has been an opportunity for the council to take on new influences and broaden its vision. Specifically:

- It has given us a concrete model and example of how change can be led by social care commissioning within the transforming landscape of social care.
- It has shown the strength and advantage of using stakeholders and partners in a new way to grow vision through innovative policy-making sessions and to generally use the creative resources of personnel to come up with new solutions to the commissioning challenges that face us.

### Legacy

Nottingham City Quality and Commissioning Directorate are planning to create a new Market management arm in April 2011 which will create under a Market Management Programme Lead - a specific Micro Market Coordinator's post as well as one for Social Enterprises, one for SME and larger providers and one for the Children's Market. This new structure will carry forward and embody much of the learning that has been trail-blazed by this successful Project.

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