

welcome



Sian Lockwood OBE

People putting policy into practice

The Coalition Government has been in power now for just over a year – and what a year it has been, with the deepest cuts in public funding for a generation, and a flood of policies designed to radically transform the relationship between citizens and the state and the way in which public services are delivered.

A central plank of the Coalition Government's programme is the transfer of power and responsibility from Whitehall to local authorities and from local authorities to communities. David Cameron's idea of Big Society, whatever we think of it, is radically ambitious, driven by a vision of a society in which local people work together with local government to identify and solve problems and create rich and vibrant local communities. It has already generated a number of Bills and White Papers, one of the most important of which is the **Localism Bill**. The Bill sets out the way in which power will be transferred from central to local government and gives local groups the right to bid to the council to take over the running of an existing service. This includes people working for the council who want to take over a service and create a social enterprise.

This work to transfer power from Whitehall to local authorities and communities runs alongside a raft of policies reforming the system of social care in England to give much more control to individuals and their carers. The Vision for Adult Social Care (**Capable Communities and Active Citizens**) retains the previous government's focus on personal budgets but increases the pace of reform, requiring local authorities to make personal budgets available to everybody eligible for public funding by 2013. There is an increased emphasis on preventative services and a new focus on giving front-line workers and carers the freedom and responsibility to improve care services, and support people in new ways.

The Government's aim of devolving

power to people in communities and giving people who need support choice and control over their services, fits almost exactly with our own aims – and their focus on the strengths and assets of people and communities is really refreshing. The policies intended to deliver those aims would, however, be all so much hot air without the people who put them into practice. Our work supporting enterprising individuals in local areas across the UK shows again and again the creativity, passion and skills that lie untapped in many communities (and many local authorities...). We know the power of co-production (people designing and shaping the delivery of their own service) to drive innovation and quality. We have seen the way in which personal budgets can genuinely put people in control and enable them to live full lives. We

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- p1 People putting policy into practice
- p2 Blazing a trail
- p3 Policy and practice - A chicken and egg story!
- p4 Does Big Society matter? Proving it is people – not policy that makes the difference
- p5 Shared Lives: from Cinderella service to Holy Grail (to mix a metaphor!)
- p6 Exciting events
Personalisation and possibilities - learning lessons from enterprising people

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understand those local authorities struggling with cuts in funding who are tempted to retain control of funding and services in the belief that it will allow them to better control costs – and admire those who trust individuals and local people to come up with solutions that provide a great service at an affordable price. The evidence that we are gathering from our work across the UK shows that they are right to have taken that leap of faith – services provided by micro entrepreneurs allow people to make limited money go further as well as providing real choice.

This newsletter tells some of the stories of the people putting government policy into practice - making a real difference to people's lives and to their local community.

Blazing a trail

(or as my mother used to say – “if you want something doing right....do it yourself”)

After an accident left him with a disability, Stephen found himself a user of care and support services. Stephen was deeply unhappy with traditional domiciliary care services. He felt he was no longer in control of his life or own home, so he started to explore alternatives. At the time Nottinghamshire PCT, in partnership with the charity In Control, was piloting personal health budgets. Stephen and Nicola, his carer, were invited onto the steering group as service user and carer representatives.

Stephen felt that a personal health budget might be a real chance for him to get the care he needed in a way that suited him and his lifestyle. After much planning and negotiation Stephen's personal health budget was agreed in November 2010.

Current rules prevent people from taking their personal health budget as a direct payment, and this meant that Stephen was unable to directly employ his own staff team. As a result he faced the challenge of finding a provider with the qualities and flexibility he needed, who was also registered with the Care Quality Commission (CQC). In order to regain control of his life it was important for Stephen that the provider would allow him to make decisions about who worked in his care team. They also needed to be able to make provision for a separate client bank account,

and have management costs that were not so high that the personal health budget was whittled away.

After thorough searching Stephen was unable to find a provider who could meet all his requirements. This inspired Nicola to use her extensive senior management and human resources experience to set up her own organisation called Solo Support Services.

Solo Support Services is now registered with the CQC to provide personal care services to people in their own homes, and provides an alternative to domiciliary care services to people who desire maximum choice and control. In developing this service, Nicola's aim was to offer a comprehensive menu of services to ensure that people have flexibility in the level of support they want, whilst at the same time providing real value for money by only paying for the services they need.

Solo also offers a direct payment support service to people who employ their own personal assistants. This service offers a menu of service options for people to choose from including payroll, managed 'client' bank account, CRB checks, support with recruitment and employee terms and conditions, performance management of staff, training and

support brokerage.

Finally Solo Support offers a third party agency support service option, filling a gap in the market for a specialist provider. Solo Support act as the legal employer of care workers, with the person who needs support in control of the recruitment process and taking a 'line manager' role. The management fees charged for this very personal service are lower than those charged by a less personal and more traditional domiciliary care service or agency.

While the third party agency service was set up specifically to give people with a personal health budget more control, it could also work for people with a personal care budget who don't want to employ their own staff.

Solo Support Services are able to work with people in all parts of the country and from the enquiries being made it looks like this is an idea that is fast catching on. It proves the old adage “if you want something doing right....do it yourself”!

**Tracy Turner
Community Catalysts Associate**

For more information on Solo Support Services Tel: 0115 8157010 or go to www.solosupportservices.co.uk



Policy and Practice - A Chicken and Egg Story!



Helen Allen

The Micro Markets project in Oldham has supported lots of inspirational people over the last three and a half years. All are running or interested in running a social care or community support service. By April 2011, 36 providers were offering a service to people in their local community. To celebrate the success of the project, we held a market-style event called **'Do YOUR Thing'** where 28 micro provider came together to showcase their collective work and to raise the profile of their service to 150 potential customers.

However, this flourishing of micro-enterprise did not happen overnight...

The journey started in 2007 when the very first micro social care enterprise support agency was established in Oldham with me in place as the co-ordinator. The agency offered support, advice, information and a collective voice to micro social care providers. At the start of the project there were only one or two enterprises already operating. Many of the enquiries and pleas for help I received came from people who were working for Oldham Council and other similar organisations; frontline staff and middle managers with a good enterprise idea and the passion, drive and commitment to make it happen.

By 2011 the 36 services that were up and running had created 140 jobs; 27 of the people in these jobs had previously worked within a LA, 89 had worked elsewhere and 24 had

previously been unemployed. Before there was widespread awareness of the Coalition Government's Big Society (to reduce the size of the state; move central control to people and communities and to generate more mutuals and third sector organisations) micro-providers in Oldham had already begun to deliver on the vision.

Sunshine Care, a Co-operative and Community Interest Company formed in 2008, engaged with me in the early days and gained help and support from the agency to get established. Chris Bailey and Edwina Lennon both worked for neighbouring Rochdale Council as homecare staff. They recognised that a massive restructure was imminent and wanted to support older people funding their own care or using a personal budget. They wanted to help them remain independent, allowing them to have choice and control over when, how and by whom they were cared for. At that time they didn't know how they wanted their organisation to be constituted, but both agreed that they wanted it to operate on a 'not for profit' basis.

Sunshine Care has gone from strength to strength, and is now registered with the Care Quality Commission (CQC), and has been awarded the Quality Mark adopted by Oldham Council (a

process developed and piloted by Community Catalysts). Chris and Edwina are also invited down to London on a regular basis as they are one of the first wave of Pathfinder mutuals.

The scheme was launched by Francis Maude MP, Minister for the Cabinet Office in 2010, as part of the government's commitment to support innovation and entrepreneurialism. They support other aspiring co-operatives as well as having their own mentor from Co-op UK. Sunshine Care were also singled out by Labour MP Tessa Jowell who was keen on their model when she met Chris and Edwina during a visit to Oldham in early 2010.



At Community Catalysts, we have learned that the policy drivers or political party are not key to effecting real change. What has real impact on communities is practical help and real support to people with excellent ideas and the motivation to enable them to set up their own enterprise to deliver care and support services. As demonstrated in Oldham this can create jobs, move activity away from the public sector, and sustain communities all whilst transforming the lives of disabled and older people and others who need care and support.

For more information on Sunshine Care visit:

www.sunshine-care-coop.co.uk

Does Big Society matter?

Proving it is people – not policy that makes the difference

Big Society is a central plank of the Coalition Government's programme and yet there remains a great deal of confusion (and some suspicion) about what the 'Big Society' actually is. The Coalition Government puts its intention like this:

'We want to give citizens, communities and local government the power and information they need to come together, solve the problems they face and build the Britain they want. We want society – the families, networks, neighbourhoods and communities that form the fabric of so much of our everyday lives – to be bigger and stronger than ever before. Only when people and communities are given more power and take more responsibility can we achieve fairness and opportunity for all. Building this Big Society isn't just the responsibility of just one or two departments. It is the responsibility of every department of Government, and the responsibility of every citizen too. Government on its own cannot fix every problem. We are all in this together. We need to draw on the skills and expertise of people across the country as we respond to the social, political and economic challenges Britain faces.'

In practice this is already happening in every corner of every community with local people, usually on a very small scale and nearly always unrecognised, working hard to help other local people and their wider community. The following are examples of how, supported by Community Catalysts, the Big Society is living and breathing in two areas of the UK in the form of micro support services.

Pulp Friction Smoothie Bar CIC is a Nottinghamshire based enterprise who work with young adults with learning disabilities to develop their social, independent and work-readiness skills. They provide opportunities and individual support for people to run pedal-powered smoothie bars at different community events.



Jill Carter runs the enterprise with her daughter **Jessie**, who has learning disabilities. When Jessie was 17 she wanted a part-time job at the weekend like a lot of her non-disabled friends. Jill felt it was unlikely that Jessie would be able to gain employment locally so together the mother and daughter started looking for something which would interest Jessie and which could be supported by Jill.

They saw a smoothie bike at a local festival, and although Jessie cannot ride an ordinary bike they thought that she might be able to manage something that was static. They spoke to a few of Jessie's friends and their families and in 2009 Jill supported them to put an application in to the Youth Opportunity Fund for £1800 to buy a smoothie bike for themselves. They were successful in their bid and the Pulp Friction Smoothie Bar Project was born!

Initially Pulp Friction operated as a youth and community group recruiting non-disabled young adults to work

alongside their regular members so that people began to build friendships and work as a team.

Whilst on their journey Jill enrolled on a course for people interested in developing Social Enterprises which was run by the East Midlands School for Social Enterprise (EMSSE). As a result of doing the EMSSE course Jessie and Jill decided to set up Pulp Friction as a social enterprise. They are now incorporated as a Community Interest Company and launch in June 2011.

If the Big Society policy is to succeed it needs to start by recognising the huge



difference that entrepreneurial people like these are already making, and to consider how to support, nurture and develop similar endeavors – rather than trying to reinvent a wheel that has been rolling along in communities for years!

Rebecca Stanley

Nottinghamshire Micro Services Co-ordinator

Find out more about Pulp Friction by visiting

[http://www.facebook.com/pages/Pulp-Friction-](http://www.facebook.com/pages/Pulp-Friction-Smoothie-Bar-Project/160288374239)

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(Continued on page 5)

The **INSIGHT for Carers** project operates a carers café in the heart of the Brierley Hill community in Dudley. Marc Carter, the Director (and parent of two autistic children) is



passionate about empowering carers and people who need care and support, and feels that bureaucracy can stand in the way of people who want to air their views, issues and concerns. Marc had a vision of creating a hub for carers and a place for people to take a break.

The café is run by volunteers most of who have a learning difficulty, are long-term unemployed or are older people. They run an array of activities at the café including carers surgeries and coffee mornings, councillors surgeries and drop-in sessions. The venue is also used to its full potential with rooms hired out to other community groups and an IT information hub on site.

Lorna Reid, Micro Services Coordinator for Dudley states *“The potential outcomes for this are great; many carers are also users of services themselves. The café offers an informal social network which empowers them to become advocates for themselves and other carers, as well as enabling volunteers with disabilities to become less socially isolated and gain work experience at the same time. This is a great example of co-production in action and promoting the ethos of the big society not to mention the increase in social capital for many members of the community.”*

Lorna Reid
Dudley Micro Services Co-ordinator

Find out more about Insight for Carers by
visiting <http://insightforcarers.org> or
follow on Twitter @i4cs @carerscafe

Shared Lives: From Cinderella service to Holy Grail (to mix a metaphor!)

Shared Lives is a highly successful way of helping people who need support to live in their community, without having to live alone – and has been established in the UK for more than 30 years.

Shared Lives is delivered in partnership between a local agency (a Shared Lives scheme) and locally recruited and approved people (Shared Lives carers).

The Shared Lives scheme (registered and inspected by the regulator in all four UK countries) ensures that carers are competent and have all the skills and knowledge they need to provide people with high quality support. The Scheme then receives referrals, matches the needs of service users

with carers and monitors the arrangements.

Shared Lives carers help people to connect with their local community and the wider society. They use their own friendships, family and

community networks to benefit the people that they support.

Recently published research demonstrates the

high quality and personalised nature of Shared Lives arrangements, with those involved in these arrangements expressing high levels of satisfaction. In addition the total cost of a Shared Lives arrangement is significantly less than the cost of other types of support service with similar objectives (eg: The potential saving for someone with learning disabilities in a Shared Lives arrangement rather than residential care is £650pw).

Most local areas have Shared Lives Schemes, but they are often small scale and marginalised, or provide support to a limited group or in a limited way. Individuals, communities and public bodies lose out where schemes are limited in the services that they provide and the people that they serve.

However, after years of being a 'Cinderella' service local authorities are finally waking up to the potential of their Shared Lives service to deliver great outcomes and savings (the current Holy Grail!). Community Catalysts has been working with a number of local schemes to help them put together a robust invest-to-save business case – resulting in exciting new investment and expansion.

Exciting events

Personalisation and possibilities - learning lessons from enterprising people

If people's experience of social care is to be really transformed there must be a wide range of care and support services of all shapes and sizes, and in all areas of the country, for people to choose from. These services need to be as diverse, imaginative and quirky as the people that use them and must harness the assets and talents of people and communities.

Community Catalysts is working hard to try and play a part in this real transformation, helping an army of micro support providers to shape the social care market in their area, one small step at a time, for example:

Stephen has been challenged by mental illness all his life and has a passion for cookery and baking. He is trying to establish an enterprise which teaches cookery to people with disabilities.

Sunshine Care is a tiny cooperative offering care and support at home and in the community to older people, delivered in a totally personal and flexible way.

We would like to share information about our work and that of the people we support by running two exciting half day events in September:

Birmingham - 6th September

Manchester - 8th September

- Hear from people who have set up their own care and support enterprise in response to the personalisation agenda
- Learn about the project we ran in Oldham to support people with care and support needs and set up their own service
- Meet people who have made the switch from using council run centres to being customers of community based micro enterprises
- Understand the challenges and opportunities everyone faces and some of the lessons we are learning

PLACES ARE FREE BUT LIMITED!

For more information contact **Jill Wighton** on
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www.communitycatalysts.co.uk

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