

Putting **People First**
Transforming Adult Social Care

Supporting Micromarket Development:

A Concise Practical Guide for Local Authorities



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Forewords



Phil Hope
*Minister of State
for Care Services*

This government is committed to transforming adult social care to help people live their lives as they wish, confident that services are of high quality, are safe and promote their individual needs for independence, well-being and dignity. Personal budgets are important to this transformation agenda as they provide people who receive social care funding with the power to choose their own support services. Equally important is the work that local authorities are doing to ensure that both people with personal budgets, and those funding their own support, have a wide range of services from which to choose.

The Department of Health sees micro enterprises as vital elements of a diverse market that provides real choice to people. We have therefore funded a two-year project, managed by NAAPS, which has successfully identified effective ways to stimulate and support the development of vibrant local micro markets.

It is with great pleasure that I now recommend this Practical Guide which distills the learning from that project. The Guide is designed for use by local authorities and other organisations wishing to stimulate and support micro social care and support enterprises. It provides local authorities with an important tool which will enable them to ensure that all local people who need support and services have real choice.

I believe this Guide will prove a valuable aid in bringing about the reality of a thriving market place where users of services are able to meet their varied needs as valued citizens of their local communities.



John Dixon
*President of the
Association of Directors
of Adults Social Services*

On behalf of ADASS I strongly commend this guide to everyone in the social care sector. It is an immensely helpful and straightforward guide for people who are commissioning services from and supporting very small organisations. These organisations can provide some of the very best tailored support arrangements of considerable creativity and variety but they need a different type of infrastructure themselves in order to thrive. Commissioners need to understand and support the conditions which make for healthy small organisations in order to provide a full range of choice and opportunity. This is particularly important with the advent of Personalisation, as many people needing support will choose micro organisations or personal assistants.

It is the job of local authorities to ensure that such organisations are available for their residents; also to ensure as far as possible that they are of good quality and meet, for example, standards on safeguarding. This can be a demanding task, and it is already clear from the national work on personalisation which ADASS has been involved with that Market Development is one of the areas where authorities are looking for assistance. This work, led by NAAPS but involving a wide range of organisations including ADASS, is the product of several years work and testing, and fills a gap in our knowledge at a providential time in the current global financial climate, support for organisations like these can also contribute significantly to regeneration and the creation of social capital.

Introduction

The Department of Health's Social Care Green Paper, *Independence, Well-being and Choice* (2005) first highlighted the need for radical change within adult social care in order to give people greater control over their lives, and access to high-quality services. This was reinforced in the White Paper, *Our Health, Our Care, Our Say* in 2006 and confirmed in the recent *Putting People First* Concordat published in December 2007. A number of other key policies and strategies including *Valuing People* 2001, *Improving the Life Chances of Disabled People* 2005, *Opportunity Age* 2005 and *Valuing People Now* 2008 have a similar focus on prevention, early intervention and community inclusion in the context of giving people choice and control.

Our Health, Our Care, Our Say talked about direct payments and individual budgets as ways to give people more choice and control. In *Putting People First* the government made a clear commitment that every person eligible for publicly-funded adult social care will have a personal budget – a clear, upfront allocation of funding to enable them to make informed choices about how best to meet their needs.

NAAPS is a membership organisation which supports providers of very small family and community based services, helping them to get the advice, help and representation that they need. We believe that the strategy set out in *Putting People First* and other documents has the potential to transform people's lives for the better and are working in partnership with others to take forward the

government's personalisation agenda. The plan to give every person eligible for publicly-funded adult social care a personal budget is proving effective and evidence from the individual budget pilots and direct payments suggests that people, once they understand how much money is available, use that money flexibly and innovatively, choosing support and services that can be shaped around their own requirements. However, for this to work properly people need a range of services and supports to choose from that reflect the full diversity of their lives, needs and aspirations.

Local authorities have been tasked with 'shaping and building the market' to ensure that choice is available and their effectiveness in this role is of central importance to the success of the government's personalisation agenda. This new role is not yet well understood and local markets in many areas still provide only limited choice to people.

Very small family and community-based services (micro social care and support enterprises) are vital elements of a diverse market that provides real choice to people. Individual solutions to individual requirements are often extremely small scale. Micro enterprises established and managed by local people are in a good position to deliver individualised services to people living in the same community. The number of micro providers has, however, fallen over the last five years as a result of the many barriers to setting up and sustaining a micro service, including regulations, legislation and commissioning practice designed for larger organisations.

The NAAPS Project

Overview

The Department of Health has funded a three-year NAAPS project to test a business model designed to support and stimulate the development of a range of micro care and support services in order to provide real choice for people that need care or support to live the lives that they choose as part of their local community. The learning from the first two years of this project has been brought together in a detailed Practical Guide (of which this document is a summary) for local authorities interested in supporting micro enterprise in their area.

The main focus of the last year of the project will be the testing of an adaptation of the agency model to provide kite marking and a quality assurance service for micro enterprise. The learning from this will inform an addendum to the Practical Guide, which will address safeguarding and quality assurance issues and will be published in March 2010.

Management of the project

The project is directed by Sian Lockwood, the NAAPS Chief Executive, and is managed by Angela Catley, the NAAPS Head of Projects. In each pilot area there is a local Project Co-ordinator: Tracy Turner in Kent and Helen Allen in Oldham.

The NAAPS project is directed and supported by a National Project Steering Board (NPSB), chaired by Paul Brittain from the Department of Health. A local steering group has been established in each pilot area and members are asked to take an active role in supporting the programme.

The Business Model

The basic business model was developed in discussion with micro social care and support entrepreneurs and informed by learning from micro entrepreneurs across all sectors. It was designed to be a support agency, offering a range of services to existing and new micro providers as well as sign-posting people to other local sources of support and advice. It required a full-time co-ordinator with good local management support. A start of the project there were clear expectations as to the main services that would be offered by the support agency.

Pilot areas

Clear criteria governed the selection of the two local authority pilot areas and the selection process ensured that the two pilot sites met all the criteria and were very different to each other.

One pilot area, Oldham in the North West of England, is a small and urban Metropolitan Borough Council whilst the other, Kent in the South East, is a large County Council operating across 12 Districts with a mix of both urban and rural areas. These local authorities face very different challenges in developing a thriving local micro market. Oldham, for example, had very few micro providers at the start of the project while Kent had a significant number of micro providers providing more traditional care services (eg very small care homes).

Why the project is relevant to all Local Authorities

Every local authority will have existing micro providers in their area but they can be hard to identify and engage; they face growing regulatory, legislative and other barriers and, in most areas, their numbers are falling.

In every area there are entrepreneurs who would be willing and able to set up new, innovative and highly personalised service options if only they knew what people needed and had the information and support that they need to do so with confidence.

The NAAPS Project is testing a business model that helps local authorities to work positively and creatively with current and potential micro providers and create an environment within which sustainable, safe and high quality micro services can thrive, providing real choice for people who need support and services. Our experience in the pilot areas of Oldham and Kent has helped us to understand what providers need and how best to help them. This learning is transferable to other areas providing the information and tools that local authorities need to support micro provision in their area.

PART ONE: **Setting the Scene**

What are micro social care and support services

What do we mean by 'micro'?

The providers of micro (very small) social care and support services are independent of any larger or parent organisation. Many providers deliver the service themselves and employ no staff to help them. Others employ a small number of staff or work with volunteers or members of their extended family in order to deliver the service. Some work on a voluntary or barter basis, with no money changing hands.

For the purposes of our work we have defined micro providers as those working with no more than 5 paid or unpaid full-time-equivalent workers. While some providers of micro services are keen to expand others are happy to stay small, providing a good local service to just a few people.

What do we mean by micro social care and support services?

Micro social care and support services are sometimes known as micro social care enterprises, micro support services or small care businesses. These titles are all used to describe services and support provided by individuals and families in local communities. Micro services can be purchased by individuals who are funding their own care themselves or through a direct payment or

personal budget or they can be commissioned or contracted directly by a local or other statutory authority. In many cases these services do not fit neatly into the definition of social care or support services.

Examples of micro services include:

- Small Care Homes
- Supported Housing
- Domiciliary Care
- Brokerage, advocacy and planning services
- Holidays and short breaks
- Support during the day
- Leisure and special interest services
- Therapies and personal development
- Employment services.

Who are the providers of micro social care and support services?

Micro services can be delivered by people using one of a number of business models including sole trader, partnership; small business, social enterprise, not for profit, charity or voluntary organisation. Services can also be delivered on a voluntary or barter basis with no business model at all, motivated simply by a desire to help other people, often have a background in health or social care but others have no formal caring experience and are keen to learn new skills and work in a new area.

Services are often delivered on a very small scale motivated by a wish to help out a neighbour or friend rather than seeing themselves as a social care or support service. The service may be delivered on an occasional basis, fitting in with other employment, personal caring responsibilities or study.

Some providers have been established for many years and are running a highly successful enterprise but the majority are struggling to make sense of their place in a rapidly changing world.

People who fund or purchase their own care are increasingly taking control and are looking for services to purchase and there are a number of new and emerging service providers responding to this opportunity. Some people with personal budgets are using them to buy the support that they need to set up a small social care or support service for other people.

Why are micro social care and support services important?

Micro social care and support services offer real benefits to:

People who need support and services

Providers of very small services are firmly rooted in their communities and have a good understanding of local issues.

They are local people providing local services to other local people. These providers support small numbers of people and this enables the provider to get to know the people who use the service, their family and supporters very well. The service can offer consistency and genuine empathy and will often “stick with people” through difficult times.

The providers of very small services face different challenges to those facing larger organisations. They rarely have to work within the constraints of unsuitable buildings or meet the needs of large staff teams with complex rota systems. This can mean that they are able to offer services that are much more flexible and responsive than those that can be offered by larger providers.

Local communities

Micro services offer employment to local people and help to build the capacity of the social care sector. This route to employment can allow people from excluded groups to become economically active and brings new people into the ‘social care’ workforce. This helps to promote community confidence in care and support services and ultimately leads to greater community cohesion.

Micro services can increase the social capital in an area by fostering citizenship, neighbourliness, social networks and civic participation for the provider, user and others in their lives and communities.

There are considerable environmental benefits from an approach that allows local people to provide support and services to other local people. People do not have to travel far to get to work and can receive support and services in their own community.

Local authorities

Providers of micro services add choice and diversity to a market that can otherwise be dominated by a small number of larger providers. They provide an important alternative to people looking for personalised services who do not wish to directly employ their own staff. Tiny care and support services are able to help people in ways that are flexible, responsive and individual, making their services very attractive to service users and their families. They can put individuals rather than process at the centre of their service in ways that many larger providers would find difficult.

Providers of very small services have a different business model which is sustainable and allows great flexibility in delivering services that people want to buy.

Providers of micro services can contribute to the achievement of key National Indicators (NIs), in particular those that relate to a reduction in the use of temporary accommodation, stronger communities, adult health and wellbeing, economic regeneration, job creation, tackling exclusion and promoting equality.

The entrepreneurialism, innovation, creativity and pioneering approach of very small providers can offer a great deal to the wider social care sector by giving a clear demonstration to local authorities and larger providers of what can be achieved in response to the personalisation agenda.

Barriers and Challenges

Local Barriers

Information

Potential micro providers need good accessible information covering all the areas involved in setting up a successful social care or support service. Comprehensive information is not always available.

Advice

There are a large number of local and national advice organisations and initiatives that potentially have relevance to very small providers but unfortunately few of these provide advice that has an exact fit with the work that they plan to do.

Marketing

Providers need to promote and advertise their service in a way that is attractive and meaningful to the individuals requiring a service and to other purchasers. Marketing is a specialised skill that few providers possess

and evidence from the project suggests that there are few resources available to providers wishing to improve their marketing skills.

Training and learning

Training courses and learning opportunities can be difficult to access for small providers who have little time available outside their caring role. The cost of attending a training course can be too high for many providers and good information about opportunities and funding for training can be hard to access.

Business support

Evidence from the project suggests that there is a lack of tailored business support for very small businesses and the advice that is available is rarely geared to the requirements of micro social care and support providers.

Local commissioning and contracting practices

A number of current commissioning and contracting practices place barriers in the way of micro social care enterprises.

Supporting professionals

Some Care Managers and Brokers have concerns about the perceived risks involved in using less traditional or familiar forms of care and support and can filter or block information about these types of service.

Communication

Providers of micro services have little or no time to actively engage in local forums, they may have limited contact with other professionals and sometimes do not have useful access to Information Technology (IT).

Market information

Evidence from the project suggests that there are barriers which prevent potential micro providers from obtaining useful information about the services that people want to buy. There are similar difficulties for people with personal budgets in finding out about the range of support and services available.

Start up funding

Many potential providers would benefit from small amounts of accessible start up funding to enable them to cover the initial costs of setting up a new enterprise or to cover living costs until their new business is established. Current providers similarly may need a small loan to help with the restructuring of their existing service. The project has demonstrated that even where such money is available it can be difficult for very small providers to access.

Local authority approaches to the implementation of personalisation

While the policy of personalisation creates an environment in which micro social enterprise can flourish the way in which it is implemented can cause some difficulties.

National Barriers

Government strategy to improve efficiency in procurement of services

A number of Government departments have adopted a strategy which aims to improve efficiency in procurement of services. The result of this overarching strategic approach is that Local Authorities are cutting the number of contracts they hold with individual providers in order to reduce transaction costs and create efficiency savings.

Regulation of Care

The current approach by government to the regulation of care services means that the regulations and national minimum standards for a particular category of care service are applied in the same way regardless of the size of the service.

Insurance

Providers can find it difficult to access affordable tailored insurance products that are required by law and/or provide security against risk.

Training and qualification requirements

Some regulated providers are expected to gain qualifications and undertake training that has limited relevance to their work. Other providers have no training and qualification requirements placed upon them and there is no requirement for them to demonstrate even a basic level of competence.

Current qualifications in care are designed for people working in more traditional care settings and can be expensive and difficult to access for individual micro providers.

Legislative requirements designed to 'solve bigger problems'

There are many pieces of legislation that are designed to address a particular issue but which inadvertently impact upon very small initiatives and effectively block their development.

Why do micro providers need support?

There has been a view that new services will simply emerge and thrive in response to the growing number of people with their own budgets. Evidence from the micro markets project suggests that this does not happen so easily.

Emerging providers

Learning from the project suggests that people who are interested in the idea of setting up a new service and who have the resources and skills necessary to deliver the service need intensive individualised help and support (hand holding) in order to make their idea a reality.

Existing providers

Providers of micro services are very well placed to take forward the government's strategy for self directed support and are able to offer highly personalised services, tailored to requirements of individuals. In order to do this they need information about the kinds of services that are required and advice, help and support to transform their service where this is needed. . Experience from current providers suggests that it can be extremely difficult for them to get clear and consistence guidance about the kinds of services that are now required and the changes that are needed from them. They struggle to engage and compete with larger providers and many are winding up their businesses or selling them to a bigger organisation.

Current micro providers have valuable skills and experience that are needed if we are to meet the requirements of everyone who needs support and services but they are increasingly leaving the sector.

PART TWO: Applying the Learning – Practical tools for Local Authorities

Getting started

Make it someone's job

It is essential that a specific person or team is allocated to set up the support agency and given the time and resources to do the job properly. A successful co-ordinator needs to be able to:

- Understand the challenges and barriers facing providers and offer practical help
- Make positive working links with a very wide range of people and organisations
- Understand local structures and networks
- Work with local organisations and individuals with the skills, knowledge and resources required by micro providers
- Understand self directed support and how it works in practice
- Work flexibly and be alert to possibilities, ideas and opportunities
- Think laterally and make connections between people and organisations
- Have a real enthusiasm for the work of small providers.

Provide good management support

In order to deliver on such a complex and challenging agenda the co-ordinator will need effective management support.

Get the location right

Evidence from the project suggests that for the agency to be successful it should be located within a team that is able to: promote its work, provide credibility and offer support and help to make effective working links with other key organisations and individuals. Its aims and work should be supported by the organisation at the most senior level.

The pilot project co-ordinators were both successfully located within their local authority although in different departments and this has both advantages and disadvantages as does locating the work within an external organisation. A partnership approach, where the local authority works with a community or voluntary sector organisation to establish the agency may provide the best of both worlds. This approach gives the agency some independence from the local authority whilst retaining local authority 'buy in' at all levels.

Plan for success

Establish a local Steering Group

An effective local steering group will help to take forward the work of the agency, bringing people together from the key organisations, stakeholder groups and local authority departments that are essential to the success of its work. The group will use its own networks and contacts to promote the work of the agency and the value of micro provision. It will bring essential resources, knowledge and experience, will help to solve problems as they arise and oversee and guide the development of the service.

Do your homework

Successful work with existing and emerging micro service providers starts with a good understanding of the area covered by the agency. The co-ordinator needs to have good information about:

- The size and scope of the geographic area to be covered
- The demography of the area
- Community structures
- People using personal budgets, direct payments or their own resources to buy services
- Services and supports already available in the area.

Focus down: Agreeing priorities and a work plan

The breadth of activity can mean that the agency becomes involved in too many different groups and initiatives and loses its focus and effectiveness as a result. It is important then that early priorities (including the types of provider that the co-ordinator will and will not support) are agreed and a work plan developed that is designed to meet those priorities.

Develop the right networks and engage the right people: think across the piece

The work of individual micro providers often crosses sector and local authority boundaries. They need advice, information and guidance about social care and support but also about areas outside their work sector. They need to be able to comply with the requirements of a range of regulations and legislation as well as the requirements of their funders. They need to understand how the local authority structure and systems work for the area in which they live but may also need to understand the structures of neighbouring or distant local authorities or of one or more Primary Care Trusts.

The co-ordinator needs to be able to think across the piece and identify organisations and individuals from different sectors who have the knowledge and experience to provide useful advice to a range of micro providers.

Finding the Providers

Finding existing providers

In some areas there are already many existing micro social care and support providers while in other areas there are very few. Some providers will be known to the local authority and/or regulators and should be easy to identify. Others will be harder to find and a variety of methods may need to be employed which could include:

Care Quality Commission (CQC)

Care Home and Domiciliary Care Providers should be registered with the Care Quality Commission (CQC) and they should be willing to produce a list of very small registered providers in your area on request.

Contracts or contacts with the Local Authority

Providers may offer health or social care services funded by a local authority, the local Primary Care or Health Trust or another statutory body. The local authority contracting department should be able and willing to supply a list of providers and this may be a useful way to identify some providers of very small services.

Supporting People Teams

Providers may be offering accommodation combined with housing related support to people and this may be funded by the Supporting

People (SP) funding stream Supporting People teams should be able to supply a list of services funded by SP in their area.

Local associations or support organisations

In every area there are organisations, groups, forums and associations formed to provide help and support to specific groups. These groups may be aware of very small providers in their area or people who might be willing and able to establish a new enterprise in response to the needs of local people.

Service user and carer groups

Groups set up to support and represent the issues faced by services users, their families and carers can be well connected and informed and have a good awareness of services in their area. They may have particular knowledge of providers who offer more individual and tailored supports.

Brokers, support planners and advocates

Brokers, support planners and advocates can be well connected to users and providers of services and supports and as a result may be aware of micro providers in the area.

These networks and contacts will allow the co-ordinator to draw up a preliminary list of the current micro providers working in the area. This list will need to be subjected to scrutiny to ensure that every provider on the list meets the criteria for the work.

Finding emerging or prospective providers

It is much harder to identify and engage with those people who are in the process of establishing a tiny enterprise or who would be willing and able to do so if they were aware that it was needed. These people are central to the purpose of the agency – the stimulation and support of sustainable micro care and support enterprises providing real choice for people – and therefore an important focus of the work of the co-ordinator.

Methods of identifying and engaging this group could include:

- Talking to existing business support and social enterprise organisations
- Using social care and support networks and contacts to identify organisations that want/need to refocus their work
- Using local authority networks to make contact with staff and managers whose services are being restructured or ended
- Working with people who have their own budget (including self funders) and their representatives to identify services which they would like to purchase and which are not currently available
- Promoting the work of the agency through voluntary and community sector networks and to the wider public
- Ensuring that the agency is seen to be accessible and open minded so that potential providers feel confident to explore new ideas and innovate

- Engaging with emerging web-based information systems such as Shop4Support and Plan My Care or local information systems.

Working with micro providers

Making contact

Once a definitive list of existing, emerging and potential providers has been drawn up the co-ordinator will need to get in touch with them to:

- Check that they meet or plan to meet the criteria of the local agency
- Tell people about the local help and support that is available to them
- Find out more about the current providers, the services that they provide and the people who are using them
- Make a personal connection with people in order to engage them with the work of the agency.

The method used by the co-ordinator to make first contact with a provider can be key to the success of the approach.

Establishing what providers want and need from a local support service

Micro family and community-based service providers are a diverse group of people offering or planning to offer very different services in a variety of ways.

In each area there will be organisations that already offer help to small enterprises and micro providers may have their needs for help and support met by these existing structures.

For all of these reasons it is essential that the co-ordinator finds out about the challenges that people are facing, the questions and ideas they have and what is already working well for them. This information is essential to ensuring that the co-ordinator offers a tailored, personal and, most importantly, effective service to providers.

Taking an individual and accessible approach

Every provider is at a different stage in the development of their service and has their own particular needs and issues so a 'one size fits all' approach is likely to be unsuccessful. The co-ordinator should work with each provider on their own terms, providing whatever they require at any given time. It is essential that s/he takes a practical approach and makes the best use of their knowledge of the area, key people, contacts and networks. The essential steps to this approach are:

- Build a relationship
- Use the knowledge and expertise of others – and signpost
- Think laterally and link people together
- Represent and give providers a voice

- Avoid tangents
- Remain realistic
- Be a catalyst for change.

Working actively with providers to address issues and reduce barriers

Enable providers to understand and meet customer needs

Personal budgets are driving real change within the social care and support market. People who use services are seeking services that are tailored to their requirements. Micro providers may need help to understand the implications of this radical change and understand their new customer base.

Help with pricing and charging

Providers may need help and support to understand the cost of their service and agree fees and charges with their customers. This will ensure that the service is sustainable in the medium and long term.

Identify and work on barriers

The co-ordinator working with individual providers, helping them to solve individual problems will become aware of local and national barriers that get in the way of people setting up and delivering services that people want to buy. The co-ordinator has a vital role in identifying and helping to minimise or remove these barriers.

Key Lessons Learned

Learning from the first phase of the pilot projects has helped us to identify the essential features of an agency that can successfully stimulate and support sustainable micro social care and support enterprises.

What is essential?

For an agency to be successful it is essential that:

- The local authority recognises that work with micro enterprises is key to shaping and building the market to ensure that choice is locally available
- The policy context of the work and in particular the clear links to Putting People First 2007 is recognised
- Work to stimulate and support micro social enterprise has the commitment of senior people
- People who have the power to drive forward the work are engaged from the beginning
- The work is properly resourced
- The co-ordinator is the right person with the right attitude, approach and skills
- The co-ordinator is able to forge excellent working partnerships at all levels
- The agency has a clear remit and focus on outcomes for micro enterprises
- The agency delivers services that micro providers want and need

- Barriers to micro enterprises are recognised, minimised or removed.

What to avoid

Getting things right is often as much about avoiding obvious mistakes as it is about positive planning and interventions. Evidence from the pilot projects suggests that for an agency to be successful it will need to avoid:

- Asking staff to combine this work with other responsibilities
- Trying to tie in the micro markets work so closely with other initiatives that it loses its focus or is limited in its ability to be creative and responsive
- Concentrating too much on traditional service models
- Getting too involved in solving problems or tackling issues that are outside the area of expertise of the co-ordinator
- Getting carried away about new services that look exciting but may not ultimately be used
- Covering too wide a geographic area or having a focus that is too wide for the people involved to make realistic gains
- Getting too heavily involved with only one or two providers
- Replicating support and services that are already offered elsewhere.

Further Help Available

Evidence gained from the pilots suggests that the local support agency model can be very effective in stimulating and supporting the development of sustainable micro services.

However, developing and sustaining a thriving local micro market is not easily achieved and we recognise that even with this Practical Guide local authorities may need extra help. NAAPS is committed to supporting the development of micro provision and has a wealth of knowledge, experience and practical resources – including fact sheets, model policies and procedures and access to tailored insurance – that can be made available to local authorities keen to provide real choice for people seeking support and services.

In addition, NAAPS is working to overcome local and national barriers to micro social care enterprise and is happy to extend that work to include barriers identified by local authorities endeavouring to support local micro provision.

More information about the help that NAAPS can offer to local authorities and to micro providers can be found on the NAAPS website www.naaps.org.uk