



HACT

up2us

PROJECT

making the choice:

early insights from *up2us*



HACT

The housing action charity



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economics as if people
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This short report is based on the early findings of the *up2us* evaluation, which has been conducted by the **new economics foundation (nef)**. *Up2us* is HACT's response to the Government's personalisation agenda, which was heralded in their Putting People First strategy in 2008.

Key terms in use throughout this report

Personalisation

We understand 'Personalisation' to be the government's policy to social care transformation which involves supporting people to have more influence, choice and control over their support. This can be through a budget or direct payment, but also includes:

- new forms of self directed support;
- services that develop and extend people's social networks;
- the support and development of User Led Organisations (ULOs);
- up to date and accessible information, advice and guidance on services, and services which help people to prevent more acute needs arising in their lives.

Co-design and co-production

When we refer to the methods of co-design and co-production we mean the process whereby people who use services, along with their family members, carers and personal networks, work with staff to plan and deliver services in an equal and reciprocal relationship.

Collective purchasing

By collective purchasing we mean a group of people pooling money to make purchases. The items purchased can be experienced collectively (like a trip or training course) or individually (like personal support or one to one tutoring). The money pooled can come from public, private or personal sources.

Summary

Up2us was conceived by HACT - the housing action charity - in response to the personalisation agenda. It seeks to find solutions to two key concerns:

- the lack of power individuals currently have to affect the development of new services and to drive up the quality of existing care and support services;
- the fear new and existing service provision is unsustainable because market fragmentation puts economies of scale at risk.

We developed *up2us* alongside social housing providers in six pilot areas. Each area has its own specific characteristics and local challenges. Each pilot is developing practical, locally focused responses to collective purchasing alongside the people they work with.

The development phase

There were three key challenges in establishing the pilots:

- **personalisation is underdeveloped:** in all the *up2us*

localities there were extremely low levels of organisational preparedness, as well as low numbers of individuals currently with access to their own budgets;

- **limited engagement:** most of the sites had little or no existing mechanisms through which they regularly met, spoke with or listened to people who were affected by their work;
- **continuity:** Local Reference Groups were set up to overcome loss of institutional memory caused by redundancies.

Current provider activity

Current activity tends to be cautious, fragmented and directed at an internal dialogue rather than being driven by the rights and needs of service users. We suggest providers:

- develop their own pilots and learn from them as with each other;
- commit internal resources;
- ensure they involve service users;
- engage with other local groups and practitioners.

Bringing people together

Personalisation is an opportunity not only to engage with users of your services, but also to involve all those who are affected by your services.

We suggest you:

- form extended relationships, beyond the provider and user of the service;
- examine ways of extending your users' networks beyond the links they have as service users.

Purchasing decisions

The purchases made so far show a desire for people to buy support to develop social connections, experience new things and share with others. We suggest you:

- spend time to understand what people value and want;
- widen the focus beyond the disaggregation of services;
- continue to review emerging evidence.

Making cultural shifts

The single biggest challenge identified by providers was the transformation of working culture and practice to support and enable personalisation. We suggest you:

- support staff to apply personalisation into practice;
- document and address issues such as risk and accountability;
- change internal protocols as practice is developed.

Changing systems

Most providers felt changes to their systems were the biggest challenges they faced. We suggest you:

- focus on developing good practice, then adapt your systems appropriately;
- consider the full possibilities of personalisation;
- work with your local authority, other providers and service users;
- learn from others.

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About up2us

Up2us was conceived by HACT in response to the personalisation agenda. The project aims to develop and test approaches that encourage people with personal budgets and other funding to jointly purchase the care and support that they want, facilitated by housing organisations.

Up2us seeks to find solutions to two key concerns:

- the lack of power individuals currently have to affect the development of new services and to drive up the quality of existing services for care and support as individual purchasers;
- the fear that new and existing service provision is unsustainable because the fragmentation of the market puts economies of scale at risk.

If it works, collective purchasing could be a 'win-win' scenario. *Up2us* is exploring how housing providers can support people who need social care and support to develop the ways so that collective purchasing can become a reality. *Up2us* is also helping housing providers to try out new approaches, develop new business opportunities and work co-productively with the people

who use their services, as well as their carers and their families.

Six pilots were set up to help people with personal budgets and other resources to collectively pool their money and purchase care and support. By doing so, we hope this will drive up service quality, stimulate growth of new services and ensure they, as individuals, have a stronger voice in the new social care and support market place. It can also support people to have more choice and feel more in control of their lives.

Up2us and collective purchasing is an open book. HACT and the local pilots are testing and developing these solutions to understand what works and what could become the models of collective purchasing in the future.

Up2us is being evaluated by **nef (the new economics foundation)**, and is

guided by two key questions:

- whether collective forms of purchasing improve the well-being of participants;
- when people put their personal budgets together, what changes might affect housing providers, or care providers, or their friends and family across the triple bottom line.

If it works, collective purchasing could be a 'win-win' scenario.

The evaluation methods include a wellbeing data collection tool, semi-structured interviews with providers, monthly calls with the project managers themed along different topics, and individual case studies.

We are at an early stage of learning in the *up2us* project. Much of what we have learnt is about the process of setting up new initiatives connected to personalisation, and the process of bringing people together to collectively purchase.

We hope you find the insights in this short report interesting. If you would like to stay in touch with the project and be informed of upcoming events and reports, please get in touch with hact@hact.org.uk.

About the pilot sites

HACT developed *up2us* alongside social housing providers in six pilot areas (see table below). Each area has specific characteristics and local challenges. Each pilot is developing practical responses to collective purchasing alongside the people they work with, suited to both their local circumstances and resources.

Barking and Dagenham

This pilot operates at an extra care scheme for older people, comprising an extra care home with 36 flats and a sheltered housing scheme of 24 bungalows.

Up2us held a number of meetings with residents, which have resulted

in two areas of activity. As a result, residents are now being supported to set up a formal association as one means of improving their contact and dialogue with each other, with their landlord and with the care provider. Through *up2us*, residents have formed a committee, and a plan of forthcoming activities. Although

Location	Provider
Barking and Dagenham	Hanover
Kensington and Chelsea	Yarrow Housing and Equal People
Kent	Porchlight and MCCH
Knowsley	Richmond Fellowship
Norfolk	Broadlands and Saffron Housing Trust
Oxfordshire	Stonham and Advance

residents do not receive individual budgets, they contribute from their own money to collectively purchase activities and have an *up2us* bank account used to fund activities.

Kensington and Chelsea

The K&C pilot has formed a co-operative of people with learning disabilities that will identify and purchase the services and activities they want. The co-operative has a

At the highly successful launch of this scheme, 35 people signed up to become members.

Board, with co-chairs (one of whom has a learning disability), and five other members with a learning disability. The Board is supported, but not run, by the senior staff of the housing partners involved in the *up2us* pilot. The Board helps to organise activities and manages the funding and payment.

At the highly successful launch of this scheme in September 2010, people chose dozens of potential activities if given the opportunity – including sky diving – and 35 people signed up to become the first members. Now the challenge is to “get people to put their money where their mouth is” and support people to collectively purchase support and events.

Due to the demand for someone to lead the activity and develop local networks, links and activities, the *up2us* pilot is now recruiting an additional worker to co-ordinate and organise the activities agreed by the Board. Meanwhile, the Board is ‘learning by doing’ about the practicalities of developing relationships and networks.

Kent

The aim of the Kent *up2us* pilot is to achieve successful collective purchases of housing and support that meet the interests and concerns of those involved. To be successful, the pilot has dedicated time to creating strong long term-support

networks and partnership between all of those involved – the individuals, families, participating providers, Housing Options and commissioners.

The *up2us* pilot is working with a supported housing project for young people, many of whom have been homeless and have backgrounds of drugs, alcohol abuse, or offending. Each young person has a small fund

A group of budget holders have collectively purchased a mini-gym for the project.

of £500 every year to help them meet their outcomes. The pilot aims to help them identify the support they need and how the services will be delivered, including opportunities for collective purchasing.

Up2us is also helping a User Led Organisation (ULO) of people with

learning disabilities. They are learning how to use computer and voice over internet technology, including web cameras, microphones, Skype phones and computers.

The ULO is using the technology to establish new opportunities to network. Within this activity there will be opportunities for people to collectively purchase further training and/or hardware and software.

Knowsley

The Knowsley *up2us* pilot consists of a number of strands. One specific pooling opportunity is being developed in a support housing project, where a group of budget holders have collectively purchased a mini-gym for the project.

Those involved have opened a Credit Union bank account, purchased the equipment via Knowsley Disability Concern and agreed a membership fee for other tenants at the project to use the equipment. The next stage is to explore other practical issues: for example, who else has access to the equipment and what happens when

one of the original purchasers leaves the project.

The pilot has also formed a strong link with Oxfordshire *up2us* and is developing a similar community networking site.

Norfolk

Norfolk is a rural county, with disparate groups and populations. There is a high proportion of older people and people with disabilities. The main area of *up2us* activity is at a housing scheme for people with significant disabilities, all of whom

They want to devolve the day centre's budget to the older people who use the service.

receive personal budgets. The *up2us* Project Manager is beginning to work with tenants to introduce the idea of pooling of budgets. There are

opportunities to purchase personal care collectively, giving residents a stronger voice in their own care provision, as well as choice over group activities.

Up2us is also working with a Cross Roads Day Centre where they want to devolve the centre's budget to the older people who use the day centre service. A test group of 20 people who attend the centre on a Tuesday will each be given a £5.00 weekly budget for them to use on chosen activities during the ten week mini-pilot. This payment can be pooled, whether in small groups or across the whole group. The aim is to enable members to experiment with prioritising their own choices by negotiating collective purchases. It will also help to identify any issues in the absence of formal budget holders.

Oxfordshire

The Oxfordshire pilot site spent a while developing their idea with a group of local users. They worked together to develop an approach

to enable people to connect and communicate what they might want to purchase, that would allow an innovative way for providers to sell their services.

The site will enable people to gain a greater understanding of what control means to them and the choices they have.

Following an extensive consultation with users they decided to create a website. Oxfordshire is now one of two pilot sites (the other being Knowsley) combining to support the development of an accessible community networking site.

The aims of the site are to provide and facilitate a flexible way for service users to communicate with

others, to find other local people with similar interests to share activities or services, to find out what is going on and to share existing knowledge.

The site will create an environment for people to purchase different things using their budgets to improve their wellbeing and will hopefully enable people to gain a greater understanding of what control means to them and the choices they have.

The website was launched in December 2010. Oxfordshire *up2us* plan to use peer mentoring, buddying and coaching as a means of rolling out the website, and teaching people how to use it. Providers are being encouraged to upload their details and advertise different services that people can buy.

The website address is www.up2uscommunity.co.uk

Insights from the development phase

The development phase of *up2us* has taken longer than originally envisaged. The first two pilot schemes did not start activity until September 2009, 15 months later than anticipated. The others followed between January and June 2010.

There were three key challenges we faced in getting *up2us* set up, which are relevant for many partnership based approaches to personalisation.

The development of personalisation

Personalisation is underdeveloped in all the *up2us* localities. There were extremely low levels of organisational preparedness for personalisation in all of the sites, and a general feeling that it was someone else's responsibility to drive personalisation forward. This was coupled with extremely low numbers of individuals currently with access to their own budgets. The most significant number of budget holders was in Kensington and Chelsea, where only 10% of people supported by the provider have budgets.

Where providers are undertaking work on personalisation it is largely confined to the 'budgeting'

element, with a particular focus on disaggregating the costs and delivery of services to an individual level. Very little work is being done by local partners on the other aspects of personalisation, including looking at early intervention and prevention, social capital, or universal services, though many sites are organising training in personalisation and self directed support for staff.

Working with people and bringing people together

Most of the sites had little or no significant existing mechanisms through which they regularly met, spoke with and listened to people who were affected by their work. We used a range of mechanisms to rectify this in the early stages of the *up2us* pilots, including developing relationships with local user led organisations, setting up a cooperative board, and establishing expert user advisory groups to inform

the project. It was essential people felt the providers were hearing and responding to their practical concerns before they were able to begin exploring collective purchasing.

It is notable that many of the housing associations are now looking to sustain ongoing dialogue with people beyond the up2us project.

It is notable that many of the housing associations are now looking to sustain ongoing dialogue with people beyond the *up2us* project. The value to providers of working with people has been shown through the variety of mechanisms used by the *up2us* pilots. Each has been shaped to suit local conditions by the people involved in purchasing.

Partnership formation and local reference groups

Each *up2us* pilot developed its own Local Reference Group (LRG) with three aims:

- to deliver local intellectual and practical support to the project managers;
- to develop local champions within key agencies (such as local authorities, housing providers and third sector players);
- to ensure that when the *up2us* project faced practical challenges there were locally well placed individuals who could help to resolve these.

Throughout the pilot there have been significant organisational changes, including the threat of, and actual, redundancies. This had made it difficult to maintain institutional memory of the *up2us* project. Although this varied in each site, in some cases membership of the LRG offered an important opportunity to introduce key local actors on personalisation.

Insights from the pilot sites

Though the projects and services being developed in each of the pilot sites are varied, there are common themes, challenges and learning emerging across the sites:

- current provider activity on personalisation;
- bringing people together: the collective side of personalisation;
- purchasing patterns;
- workforce change and cultural transformation;
- changing systems and processes.

For each topic we have reflected on the learning from the evaluation, and where relevant, made suggestions to providers of the steps they might take to develop personalisation within their own organisation.

Current provider activity on personalisation

With a few exceptions, personalisation is in its very early stages across the pilot sites. There is little link up between housing providers, the local authority or user led organisations, and the number of budget holders currently supported in *up2us* areas is very low, often a few individuals. Only one *up2us* area

has around 10 per cent of the people they support on budgets.

Personalisation has been interpreted as requiring a very individualised response, with individual care planning resulting in 1:1 support provision and micro commissioning of care packages. Providers are focussed on the disaggregation and individualisation of services and payment as a way into personalisation. Collective models that support personalisation are new to all the providers involved and in stark contrast to current activity.

Personalisation is being introduced to a variable extent across the sites, with activities underway including:

- developing new service menus and pricing models;
- changing websites to face individuals as consumers;
- setting up internal working groups to tackle specific aspects of personalisation;

Getting started

Pilots of personalised services are an effective way of understanding what will need to change in practice, and a means of examining the micro level process and systems needed to support new ways of working. Some providers have been able to develop new contracts, and models for staff management, based on their experiences with *up2us* pilots.

Devoting internal resources to developing an organisation's agenda for personalisation is a good step towards changing practice and process. Providers involved in *up2us* have done this with internal working

groups, or personalisation leads. But it is critical that people affected by services are bought into the centre of any transformation process and are able to contribute their views, interests and ideas.

Identifying different networks and resources within communities is a crucial step. Connecting to these and strengthening them as a core aspect of work is needed to fulfil the best ambitions of personalisation. *Up2us* has provided a mechanism by which housing providers can engage with groups and resources in their locality.

- appointing personalisation leads to act internally as champions of personalisation;
- expanding the number of staff on flexible and casual contracts;
- developing small scale pilots of personalised services;
- devolving small pots of funding for users to begin to simulate individualised budget holding and purchasing;
- staff personalisation training;
- setting short term (3 year) targets with the aim of transitioning a proportion of users to personalised services.

Though providers' activity is a step in the right direction, it is cautious, fragmented and directed at an internal dialogue rather than being driven by the rights and needs of people affected by their services.

This said, most providers involved in *up2us* recognised they were only just beginning to address personalisation, and that there was much more work to be done before it became a feature of their core service. The single biggest challenge identified by providers was the transformation of working culture and practice to support and enable personalisation. The activities and processes needed to underpin this change, however, were unclear.

Bringing people together: the collective side of personalisation

A critical part of the pilots so far has been finding ways and forums to bring people together. For many of those involved in the pilots, developing networks and linking people together was outside their experience. It has taken time for support groups to emerge and has

sometimes required the providers to take action to address issues of immediate concern to people affected by their services. The personal networks people form are not always obvious to providers who have previously grouped people in relation to their service need. For example, personal interests, shared experiences or geographical proximity might act as ways of linking people into groups that act as a starting point for collective purchasing. All too often, providers do not have these relationships developed. Supporting and working with these groups is a much more powerful route to shaping personalisation on the ground than holding one-off focus groups.

The voices and involvement of people who are affected by services is also integral to developing collaborative and collective approaches, but is under developed and has been undervalued in almost all the sites. People's insight helps providers understand how their services might need to change as personalisation is developed. To

Creating networks

Form extended relationships with people who use your service beyond that of provider and recipient. Other potential local relationships to build include user led organisations, carers networks, peer support networks, and local community organisations.

Reflect on your service to think about whether you provide opportunities for people affected by your services to meet each other, and extend their social networks beyond your services.

date this resource seems to have been considered non-essential to providers. Since the pilots have started at least two areas have recognised the value of the forming networks and relationships with people and aim to spread this activity across their organisations.

Purchasing patterns

The *up2us* pilots are bringing people together and enabling them to take the lead in identifying the support and services they want to purchase. The current purchases being made in the pilot sites are largely funding social activities, such as excursions, and the purchasing of goods, such

as gym equipment. This demand may show the direction of travel for core service provision. Some providers involved in *up2us* have also suggested that developing and maintaining forums for people to meet each other will become in itself a future core service.

Activity at the pilot sites has begun to demonstrate the value to providers of spending time developing relationships with budget holders, supporting the formation of networks among people and in one case developing strong links with a ULO. The purchases made so far also show a desire for people

to purchase support that develop social connections, experience new things and share experiences with others. This suggests that collective models which bring people together

may have an important function in developing the social capital strand of personalisation. This is something we will keep as a key line of enquiry throughout the project.

suggestions

Purchasing decisions

Understanding what people value and want in their lives is critical to making personalisation successful and will inform how services must change. Many providers involved in the *up2us* pilots have found it useful to begin a series of ‘conversations’, or facilitated sessions with people who use their services, to try and understand what type of life people want, and how services and support might best realise this.

Providers should widen their focus beyond the disaggregation of services: personalisation is far more than allocating

budgets. It is also not necessarily synonymous with individualisation. The potential of collective and collaborative purchasing may not be fulfilled if this remains the lens through which you see personalisation.

Providers should continue to review emerging evidence on personalisation, and what people are buying, and use this to reflect on their own service to understand changes in the marketplace. The collective purchasing groups will provide useful evidence on what people value and want to buy which could be used by providers to reshape their service offer.

Workforce change and cultural transformation

Project managers and providers have concerns about the implications of personalisation for the workforce. There is a need to effect a cultural shift towards personalised ways of working across all services, not just those supporting budget holders or publicly funded individuals.

Personalisation suggests there will be a change for the workforce, with many providers assuming there would be increasing job insecurity, and a need for more flexible contracts and working conditions. The experience of the *up2us* project managers has been largely positive, with the main challenge being their sense that the ‘system’ of provision has not yet caught up with personalisation. As a result, they are having to break down a number of barriers locally to push forward personalisation.

Personalisation also means providers may need to move towards a more facilitative role, and staff will need to understand the values of

personalisation and self directed support, and apply these to the way they work. Many providers recognised that the cultural changes in the way they work would need to be supported and strengthened by new processes and policies.

It will be important to explicitly address issues of power, control and accountability. This is particularly important if personalisation is to have a positive effect on wellbeing. Personalisation demands that adults should be the best judge of their own wellbeing. In some of the pilot sites, however, purchasing decisions made by people are being challenged by staff, especially when they are making purchases that don’t resemble traditional ‘care’ or ‘activity’ purchases.

We are working closely with the project managers to understand the skills and techniques they are using to develop the *up2us* pilots as this may demonstrate some of the competencies required to support personalisation.

Making cultural shifts

Providers must support staff to better apply the principles of personalisation into practice. This training should be co-developed with service users in order to begin to understand and implement the cultural shift in behaviours required. Many providers feel this is an important transition, but one which is opaque, and they find it difficult to conceptualise how the transition will occur.

Document and address issues such as risk and accountability. Many fears and myths are developing around where these will sit as personalisation is developed. Working with

budget holders, care workers and the local authority to understand and iron out who is responsible for what, and how decision-making should take place will be vital to developing personalisation.

Internal protocols will need to change as the practice of self directed support and personalisation is developed, to support the new ways in which staff must work. If process changes underpin practical changes it will make it more difficult to go back to business as usual, and enable a much more concrete shift towards personalisation.

Changing systems and processes

Up2us has made practical steps forward in relation to systems and processes. As pilots schemes, however, the activities have been on the fringe of organisational activity and so have not had a significant impact on workforce or cultural

changes. Most providers involved in the pilots felt the change needed in their systems and processes was the biggest challenge they faced, raising issues such as staff contracts, disaggregation of services, individual pricing, and back office IT and finance systems.

Shaping systems

Focus on developing good practice, and training staff to adapt the principles of personalisation to the way they work. Then processes and systems can be adapted to support and enable personalisation to flourish.

Consider the full possibilities of personalisation, from the individual through to the more collective models. Can services be developed to meet a range of demands from people?

Work with your local authority, other providers and service users to agree where decision making will sit, and what the process for this will be.

Learn from others. Some providers are already working with small groups of budget holders and have set up effective systems to support this. There is a huge amount of learning already developed by other organisations, such as In-Control.

Personalisation does not, however, always need to involve disaggregation. As the focus of *up2us* on the collective and collaborative approaches shows, individual units are not the only way forward for personalisation. Mass disaggregation of costs and services may be a false goal for providers.

It is important that form follows function in this sense. Systems and

processes will emerge in response to new ways of supporting people, but they cannot lead from the front. The experience of *up2us* shows that working in a person centred way, and applying the principles of self directed support, can be thwarted in practice due to the prevalence of old processes, or as a result of a vacuum of decision-making which leaves providers, and local authorities, unsure of where responsibilities sit.

Up2us has been made possible by the funding of:



The Department of Health has also provided funding to the *up2us* project.

Up2us was also made possible by funding from local housing providers.

If you would like to read a more detailed summary of the project and learning, visit www.hact.org.uk.

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The housing action charity

About HACT

HACT is a national charity that exists to improve the wellbeing and living conditions of poor and marginalised people.

Our projects deliver lasting change, by harnessing the energy and enthusiasm of local people, housing providers and other organisations.

We provide the expertise and the resources to make change a reality.

We invest in work that benefits local people but has national resonance and influences national housing policy.

For further information, visit www.hact.org.uk



economics as if people
and the planet mattered

About nef

nef (the new economics foundation)

is an independent think-and-do tank that inspires and demonstrates real economic well-being. We aim to improve quality of life by promoting innovative solutions that challenge mainstream thinking on economic, environmental and social issues. We work in partnership and put people and the planet first.

We are unique in combining rigorous analysis and policy debate with practical solutions on the ground, often run and designed with the help of local people. We also create new ways of measuring progress towards increased well-being and environmental sustainability.

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