

Personal Social Care - what works for older people living in rural areas?

Discussion note, January 2018

About this note

This is a background and discussion note for the Rural Wisdom project and everyone else who is interested in making rural communities work well for older people. It draws on conversations with people in the 5 demonstration areas in Scotland and Wales and what we are hearing from people in other rural areas.

This is a shared topic across the Rural Wisdom areas for several reasons.

1. Wales is looking at developing personalised care and it would be good to draw on the experience in Scotland, where the Self-directed support arrangements came in a few years ago.
2. Self-directed support has been going in Scotland for several years. In some areas it is having a good impact and it is slower in other areas. But many rural areas are finding it a challenge even when other parts of that Council area and HSCP locality are doing ok.
3. There are ideas and strengths in rural areas that can contribute to solutions and make personalised support and care work well for many people.

Current arrangements in Scotland

The Self-directed support arrangements came into effect in 2014. For how it is supposed to work, everyone is entitled to:

- Identifying what outcomes they want to achieve and being part of a conversation about the best way to realise this
- Advice and support on community-based support, even for people whose needs are not high enough to get care paid for through the Council/Health and Social Care Partnership
- Choosing how they want to get care organised – a direct payment and organising it themselves (Option 1), the Council arranging through a care provider they have selected (Option 3), or different features and combinations of these approaches (Options 2 and 4)
- Whatever way it is organised, the person always has choices in how the support is delivered
- Access to independent help and advice on all stages – someone who can help you understand what the choices are and help you work out what is best for you
- Involving other people such as friends and people you trust to help you at the assessment and other stages

- Access to help with managing a direct payment – including employing Personal Assistants or having an agreement with a care provider – for people who choose to take this option.

Outside the Box produced Over the Fence, which is a resource for people who are new to all of this. This also gives you sources of further information.

www.overthefence.org.uk

Audit Scotland recently published a report on the national progress. This confirms the experience of people on the ground that the implementation of the new arrangements is patchy. There are recommended actions that will improve many aspects of the implementation.

See <http://www.audit-scotland.gov.uk/report/self-directed-support-2017-progress-report>

These are things that people find make a big difference when they are working well

Having someone to help you through the process – understanding the forms and the language, working out what to ask for, thinking through what will help you achieve the life you want.

The Council/HSCP and other people making it all easier for people to understand.

Social work staff who are doing the assessments and reviews and working with people in an area who understand about life in a rural area and ideally have contacts with the local community groups etc.

Example: People living in Kinloch Rannoch were having a lot of problems when they were part of the caseload of a team covering a large area. The social worker who is now doing this role is wonderful – it is a dedicated post for this area, she already knows the area, it is easy to reach her and when she comes to see people they find she is easy to talk to.

There are models for providing support that work very well in rural areas.

Example: The Health and Wellbeing Co-operative was developed by people living in Highland Perthshire. This is a co-op of self-employed people who provide support that helps older people and others stay independent and well for as long as possible. Their Development Worker, Donna Murray-Trail, supports people living in rural Perthshire to become carers on a voluntary, employed or self employed basis.

<http://ruralwisdom.org/whats-working-well/the-care-wellbeing-co-op/>

Example: The Boleskine model was first developed by people living in Boleskine, which is a village on the shore of Loch Ness. People who needed support had to go into care homes as providers struggled to reach the village. The combination of support they have now developed is:

- Local people providing good neighbour support, lunch club, etc to anyone in the village
- A few local people working as care workers and supporting people who need more personal or social care, but employed by a larger care provider rather than doing this as Personal Assistants. Highland Home Cares are the employer and support them to be a self-managing team. Staff have access to training, advice etc and the benefits of being part of a bigger care provider.

The model has worked well and Highland Home Carers now work in partnership with local people in other parts of Highland.

Other areas, such as locations in Aberdeenshire, are looking at how they can use this approach. The Care Inspectorate (regulator of care in Scotland) is supportive and open to conversations with people in local areas and care providers about how they can work in this sort of partnership in their location.

There is a film at <http://highland-home-carers.co.uk/what-we-do/self-directed-support/>

(The sound and film were a bit out when I last looked at it. It might be my browser or may be that the film is getting old. Please bear with it.)

Local groups can ask everyone in a very local area - even places that are remote - what they want and then plan responses.

Example – The We Care group in Kinloch Rannoch sent a questionnaire to everyone in the village and area covered by that GP practice. The survey asked people both what support they might want and what they could contribute.

Jill Davies is the Rural Wisdom Development Worker for this area and will have updates as this progresses: jill.d@otbds.org

It helps when the payment for care takes account of the practical aspects of delivering support in rural areas, especially around travel time and costs.

Rural areas are more likely to want a lot of smaller sources of support rather than a few big ones. The public sector commissioning arrangements for care providers can make this work, or can place so many barriers in the way that it becomes almost impossible. The public sector procurement rules in Scotland say it is possible, so it helps when the policies and practice of each Council use the flexibility.

It also helps when there is ready access to advice and support for local businesses and people who are interested in doing this sort of work on a self-employed basis.

Example: GrowBiz is a community led charity in Perthshire that has this role. They had a big role in getting the Health and Wellbeing Co-operative off the ground.

Jill has had links with them for several years and is a good source of information: jill.d@otbds.org

<https://growbiz.co.uk>

Ways for the people giving care and support – self-employed care workers, people in a very small care provider or Personal Assistants – to be able to get on-going professional development to develop their skills.

Example: This is something that Growbiz and the Health and Wellbeing Co-operative provide for people working in Highland Perthshire.

Ways for people living in rural areas to get easy access to help to work out what they want, advice on which arrangements will work best for them and help if it is needed at any later point. Some of the practical difficulties people face are the distance from towns where independent advice services are based, poor broadband connections that limit access to on-line sources of advice, and not having relatives (who are recognised by services as the person's carer) living nearby.

Ideas – These are examples of approaches people are using and suggestions on ways to make the advice and this type of support easy to access by people living in rural areas:

- Independent advice services, such as SDS Forums and Advocacy projects) running regular outreach sessions in rural areas – for example at village halls, community groups, etc
- Partnerships between independent advice and support services and voluntary and community groups in rural areas who are already in touch with people who are more likely to need social care
- Volunteers providing follow up contact with training and back up from people with specialist skills
- Citizen advocates
- Community brokerage support
- Brokerage support by organisations that deliver other services in local areas - making this a distinct service and separate from any care provider work

There are examples of broker support, and the strengths and challenges of each from the Getting There project. This was a project based at Outside the Box that developed the capacity of peer support and other user-led groups around the opportunities that Self-directed support brings.

<http://otbds.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/Broker-paper.pdf>
<http://otbds.org/projects/getting-there/>

Actions we could take to make it work better for people now

Actions that people in any area can do

Create more sources of social care for people living in rural areas:

- Look at opportunities for small-scale services
- Look at the scope for partnerships between local groups and established social care providers
- Ask about development support for micro enterprises in the area

Look at ways for local people to take on the role of giving advice and support to people around the process of getting support – finding out what is there, explaining the process, asking for an assessment, going with them to assessments and reviews, and so on

- Build partnerships between groups and services
- Ask about sources of training for volunteers for the agencies who provide the service in each Council area
- Build it in to local projects and make it an explicit part of what they do
- Invite agencies that provide advice on SDS or personal care to hold a monthly advice session at a village hall or other location in rural communities.

Actions that the Rural Wisdom project can do

Share examples from rural areas, to learn more and be able to show people what is possible on models of delivering social care support and ways to provide advice and information.

Bring together people who want to see good access to support and advice for people living in rural areas

More information

Rural Wisdom website: www.ruralwisdom.org

Contact in Rural Wisdom team: Anne at Outside the Box: anne@otbds.org

