



PERSONALISATION AND CRIMINAL JUSTICE

What is personalisation?

Personalisation is part of a major public services reform agenda in Scotland as outlined in the key social care policy document 'Changing Lives' (Scottish Government, 2009b, p.10). It is a social care approach whereby individuals become more involved in how services are designed and delivered and receive tailored help (i.e. prevention, maintenance or intensive support) for their particular needs. It is fairly well established in learning disability services and has started to become more widely employed in mental health services. Personalisation aims to offer increased choice and control to users of social work and other public sector services and to target limited public funding more effectively. There has been some discussion around the extent to which personalisation (Weaver, 2011) is linked to increased marketization of public services.

How might personalisation work in criminal justice?

Criminal justice services are not routinely associated with promoting choice, control and/or involvement for those who use them. Deprivation of choice is generally implicit in the concept of punishment. However, research by Ward (2002) argues that desistance from offending is more than not having opportunities to offend. It involves individuals having meaningful lives and being invested enough in their local communities that the need or desire to offend diminishes. He proposes a strength based approach to offender rehabilitation – the Good Lives Model - whereby people are supported to develop their own capabilities and pro-social networks (rather than having their activity further restricted) to avoid reoffending. There are clear similarities between the Good Lives approach and desistance theory – both emphasise the need for culture change, moving away from individuals being 'granted' help from specific monolithic professional services to a more flexible two way process whereby individuals and services work together to do what works to reduce reoffending. In addition, the changes that have already been made to ways of supporting people in other social care sectors (e.g. learning disability) are pertinent to the criminal justice sector since many offenders have learning disabilities, mental health problems and other needs including dementia in an ageing population.

Would it work for everyone?

Personalisation principles apply most readily to high volume, low tariff offenders - i.e. individuals who receive prison sentences or community based alternatives of less than four years with a history of multiple reoffending. High risk offenders have not been identified as appropriate participants at this stage.

What might it look like?

A pilot project by Simon Community Scotland for people who have experienced homelessness using a self-directed support approach has demonstrated that contrary to expectation, peoples' needs were fairly modest, e.g. seed money to set up micro enterprises, funding to attend specialist



counselling or rehabilitation to circumvent long waiting times and/or avoid old haunts, help with training and social activities or general support for a fixed period to settle into accommodation. It seems plausible that a similar approach might work in criminal justice particularly since many individuals have also experienced multiple exclusion from services including social housing.

A personalisation approach means that the social care system within which everyone operates will have to adapt from doling out assistance to 'deserving' individuals to one where everyone has rights and responsibilities in a competitive marketplace. This gives credence to the criticism that personalisation is another way of cutting services. However, a comprehensive choice of large and small service providers benefits individuals in that a variety of levels of need can be met and prevents a large block of exclusive providers being created. In addition to a diversity of service providers, Ward argues that interventions could be co-produced by a broad group of stakeholders including offenders, victims and families and their wider communities.

For example, Greater Manchester Probation Service instigated a personal budget pilot service for 18 to 25 year olds (cited in Fox *et al.*, 2012) who were allocated two thousand pounds each from a pooled multi-agency funded budget. It was used as a pot of money for small scale services like rent deposits or to fund diversion to a variety of public and voluntary sector services like specialist counselling, literacy classes and employability/training.

Even where there are compulsory (i.e. court directed) requirements, it may be possible to manage certain components more flexibly so that an individual gets what they need to tackle their offending behaviour. For example, a Community Payback Order has several requirements as follows:

- Unpaid work or other activity
- Offender supervision
- Compensation
- Programme
- Mental health treatment
- Drug treatment
- Alcohol treatment
- Residence
- Conduct

What happens next?

- Networking with other agencies involved with self-directed support and personalisation on an adhoc basis
- Quarterly learning network meetings to share experiences and good practice
- Learning from other self-directed support/personalisation pilot projects in related social care fields, e.g. homelessness, addictions, mental health, learning disability



- Making contact with other organisations wider afield to see what their experiences/lessons might be
- Moving Forward pilot project in 2017 to test out criminal justice and personalisation

REFERENCES

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For more information contact

VictoriaMurray@turningpointscotland.com

Victoria Murray - Turning Point Scotland

