



Models for Self-Directed Support broker support

Getting There
Discussion paper

Outside the Box

November 2012



Introduction

Introduction – what this section covers:

- About Getting There
- Summary and our conclusions
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- Ways to use this discussion paper
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About Getting There

The Getting There network brings together user-led groups which provide social care services and who want to learn more about Self-directed Support (SDS) and what it can mean for voluntary organisations like them.

Some organisations which are part of Getting There are exploring options around broker support. Many people who are members of these organisations are looking for greater choice for themselves as well as thinking about what the future may be for the organisation. They feel that people having access to good support from a broker who understands someone's circumstances and shares their values is a very important part of the future development of SDS in their local areas.

Summary and our conclusions

This paper looks at some of the ways in which people can get broker support to help them get the best use of the arrangements for Self-directed support which are getting introduced. It will help organisations decide if they want to provide broker support and, if so, which model is right for them. It can also be used as part of discussions between organisations about possible partnerships.

The paper outlines the features of good broker support.

It then looks at how these usually apply to a series of models for the provision of broker support. In some the people providing the broker support are individuals – family or friends of the person who will be using services. The others are different types of organisations focussing on broker support or where this is part of a range of activities.

This is what we think are the main conclusions.

- Each model of broker support has its potential strengths and limitations.
- There may be additional steps that can reduce the limitations of a model.
- Some of the models could work well for a user-led provider - be viable for the organisation and also benefit members and other people in the area.

About this discussion paper

This paper is intended to encourage discussion about one aspect of the development of Self-directed Support. It describes some of the models which are emerging for broker support around SDS. We have produced it to help user-led service providers consider the options for them as organisations, as well as the options for the people they support or who are their members.

The legislation to extend Self-directed Support includes provisions that will require each local authority to give people access to independent advice around the options for both the type of support they get and the way this is organised.

There are already organisations and teams which help people who have a Direct Payment - which will now be one of the options within SDS - to manage their budget, recruit and employ Personal Assistants or negotiate with service providers for the support they want.

This paper is based on what we have learned from recent discussions around SDS broker support in Scotland through Getting There and with other people and networks. It also draws on the experience of broker support in other places.

We wrote a draft of this paper a few months ago and circulated it to other organisations and people who are part of developing the implementation of Self-directed Support. The quotes in the paper come from people who gave comments on the earlier draft and people who are part of the Getting There network. This version also includes models, and aspects of how the models can be delivered in practice, which we had not thought of when writing the first draft. Our experience of developing this paper confirms that there are many helpful ideas and experiences on this topic and many advantages in involving other people when exploring possible options for using or providing broker support.

We are grateful to everyone who helped us with this discussion paper. The development of Self-directed Support is a topic which many people care about. The development of broker support is an aspect where people have different views about what will work best for people who want to get access to care services as part of having a good life. It also reflects the different circumstances of the people who may benefit from the increased choices that SDS will bring.

Outside the Box and the organisations in the Getting There network are not suggesting that any particular models described here are better than others, or that all of the models should be adopted. We also know that the practical arrangements for broker support in specific settings and locations can bring together elements of several models that are described here.

We hope that this paper contributes to the on-going development of ideas and good practice on Self-directed Support. We also hope that the Getting There network can continue to be one of the source of support and exchange of ideas for user-led providers which want to explore the ideas further.

Ways to use this discussion paper

User-led service providers and other organisations can use this paper as part of considering options and planning for the future.

- What model is right for the people we know?
- Are any of these models right for us as an organisation?
- What can we do to adapt a model to get an even better mix of the strengths and opportunities?

It can also be used when organisations are discussing ideas around the development of SDS and exploring possible work with partners.

- Is there scope for several types of broker support in this area?
- Could 2 or more sources of broker support work in ways that complement each other, to create more choices for people?

About user-led service providers

This is the definition of user-led service providers that is used in the Getting There project.

- User-led service providers are voluntary organisations where the majority – and sometimes all – of the members are people who use that service or share those circumstances.
- People who use, or may use, the service lead its development and delivery. This can happen by being trustees or through another planned, explicit arrangement.
- The organisation is delivering practical services to people. It may also do other things, such as be a collective voice for members or people in those circumstances, or give more general information and advice.
- People can be one or more of: member, trustee, volunteer, paid member of staff and someone who uses the service.
- There are processes and policies in place to manage roles and responsibilities which enable some people to take on more than one role, or move between roles.
- The organisations are usually quite small compared to others that provide social care services.
- The services often have a strong peer support element – such as specific peer support groups or mentoring services, or as a strand running through much of what the organisation does, or both.
- The services also often encourage and support members and people who use the service to identify and ask for the type of life they want, beyond just the use of that service.

The circumstances of the people who are using the services cover a wide range. They include:

- People who have physical disabilities.
- People with sensory disabilities.
- People with learning disabilities.
- People who have an autistic spectrum disorder.
- People with mental health problems.
- Older people, including older people who are very frail.
- People who have dementia.
- People with an acquired brain injury.
- People who are or have recently been homeless.
- People who have an alcohol and/or drug addiction.
- People who are vulnerable in other ways and may be at risk of harm.
- People who are carers and who use services for their support needs.
- People who have several disabilities or who need support for several reasons.
- People who expect to use support services for a short period.
- People who expect to have support for a long time or for all of their lives.

The groups which are part of the Getting There network each have their own arrangements for who is involved and how they work.

Other organisations and policies use different definitions of 'user-led' – such as a requirement to have a minimum of 51% or 75% of trustees or committee members who are disabled people or to have a majority of staff and volunteers who share the members' circumstances.

The question of how an organisation is structured is a significant part of discussions about the possible forms of broker support. This is a brief explanation of some of the reasons why groups which are part of the Getting There network consider themselves to be 'user-led' even though they do not always have people who use services as the majority of their trustees.

- Some groups do not make a distinction between people who use services and people who have other roles such as carers or friends, as long as they all share the values and aims. Sometimes these groups are focussed on creating opportunities in the local community or promoting social inclusion. They provide care services as one way of achieving these aims while other activities involve a wider group of members.
- For people with some health conditions, the pattern of the illness or of people's situations means that people can move between using a service, not using it now, and expecting that they may – or certainly will – need support in the future.
- Some people use a service themselves and are also the partner or carer of someone else who also needs that support – so they are both a service user and a carer.

- For some service providers, a high proportion of the people who use the services are not able or not willing to take on the role of a committee member or trustee. Examples include organisations where members are people who live with an addiction, where it may not be safe for them or for the organisation for them to take on a formal governance role. Here, the group may find other ways for people who are members to make decisions and lead the group.
- Another situation is groups which bring together and support people who mostly use the services for just a short while. This can include people who usually come into contact with the services at times when their lives are very complicated and/or there is a crisis. Again, these groups can find other ways for the people who use the service to have an influence and lead the service without having to take on the responsibilities and tasks associated with a formal governance role.

“We started as a group led by disabled people. Then we became an arts group led by disabled people. Now we think of ourselves as an arts project led by participants who happen to include disabled people.”

“Many of our members are people who came to us when they were unwell but have since moved on in their recovery. It is important to us that some of our activities are open to anyone in this area who wants to take part. We say we are a social inclusion group and a mental health group.”

About broker support

We have taken a fairly wide definition of broker support for the purposes of this discussion paper. Many people and organisations which do this already would not think of themselves as having a broker role. Instead, they would see themselves as giving advice or information. Some people would say they were being a friend.

This is why we have referred to broker support rather than to broker services.

These are the key features which we have considered when we looked at the different models of broker support:

- 1 The starting point is helping someone think about what they want in their life and what will be a good life for them.
- 2 Someone helps another person ask for and arrange the services and other supports they want to use in order to get the type of life they want.
- 3 The range of potential supports is wide. These can be social care services, or other services such as housing, leisure, transport, education, and so on. They can also be services that anyone can use such as retailers which deliver to your home. The supports can also include relationships which enable the person to get the opportunities and benefits they want, such as friends who give lifts or someone who phones each evening for a chat and to remind the person about an end of the day routine.
- 4 Broker support also helps people identify and plan around income or access to resources.

- 5 The broker's focus is on what is best for each person they support and they are not starting from the basis of using a particular service or range of services, or only looking at some sources of income.

"The tendency is to think that a broker is one person or one agency rather than a range of functions. But the main elements of broker support may be provided by several different people or agencies or models if that's what works for the person. For example keeping an eye on how things are going and helping to think about the future may be a role for one person's circle of support, but they might want someone else to help them with organising particular types of support that require payment via another model."

"Some of the younger disabled people we know are asked 'what do you want to do?'. But with limited life experience or knowledge of what is out there how can they say what they want now or in the future or know that what you choose today does not have to be what you do tomorrow."

"It needs to be there for people who are paying for their support themselves as well as for people who get some of it paid by the local authority. Lots of people in our group have good pensions and savings and know they are above the financial threshold. They know they will pay for their support. But they still need some advice and help in getting the package that is right for them."

"A key point about brokerage and its role in self-directed support is that brokers are able to help the person think beyond services and especially traditional services. The broker support should not just be about helping the person to arrange services, but about helping them to think about, plan and organise the supports (not the services, although a service might be needed for some aspects) they need to live the life they want."

"A good broker will help people to think about and plan for things they did not think possible or that they might not be able to imagine."

"In our experience the best impacts come when the person doing the broker role takes a really wide approach and thinks about the ordinary relationships which anyone uses to try or sustain something, such as friends who go swimming together, or joining a reading group, or being part of a church congregation where people help each other to attend services."

"Signposting and the whole understanding and access to information is going to be core to people being able to get the best from SDS."

"The whole point of SDS is giving people choice and control and getting the services that can respond to each person's situation and preferences. The same should apply to the broker support."

This is a list of the main elements of broker support which we have identified across many examples.

- Listening to the person.
- Helping them plan what they want in their life.
- Helping them look ahead and manage changes in their life.
- Helping the person think about what will help them get what they want – such as friends and community, where they live, access to ordinary activities and services and to support services.
- Helping them identify options and make informed choices around services and supports, so the person can also choose which provider they use as well as which type of service.
- Identify income, including other sources which can have an impact on the total package – such as income to make changes to the person’s housing which then lets them be more independent or need less routine care services.
- Organise the services.
- Manage the budgets and arrange how the payments will get made – do this themselves or find someone else who can do it.
- If the person is using a Personal Assistant as part of the support, arrangements for this aspect are managed: recruitment, training, the HR aspects such as on-going supervision and professional support, payroll and making sure everything is right in terms of employment law and good practise. Again, the person or organisation providing the broker role can do this themselves or find another person/organisation to do it.
- Checking back with the person looking for support at every point.
- Keeping an eye on what is happening and reviewing the outcomes.
- Helping the person reflect on how it is working out and thinking about further changes they want as they have more experience or as circumstances change.

In this discussion paper we have used the term broker support for all the situations where someone is taking on one or more aspects of the role for someone else, even if the people themselves would not describe it this way.

Factors to consider around the models

We have identified a range of factors which are concerned with the broker arrangement working well for both the people getting support to plan for a good life and for the people providing the broker support.

- The priority on each of these factors will vary for different people and at different times.
- Independence from the local authority's allocation of budgets and from service delivery, to enable the broker to focus only on what is right for each person.
- Able to work with and get the right outcomes for people across a range of situations – people with different disabilities and health conditions, and equality and diversity aspects.
- Brokers having a good level and range of knowledge and skills.
- Access to more specialist skills and knowledge when needed.
- Quality standards and access to training and professional support for the broker.
- How the broker support is paid for and costs to the individuals who are looking for the support.
- Sustainability and viability of the broker support.
- The position around protection for the person getting the support and for the broker if something goes wrong.

“Listing it out like this helps identify the strengths and the risks. Looking back, I can see why some of our experiences with formal and less formal broker roles went well and why others were less successful. This will help us plan it better in the future.”

“What we are learning is that there is no one right way to provide broker support.”

“We need to remember that people can use more than one type of broker support. Someone can use one type of support for most situations but get a different source of support when life is more complicated or they need a specialist expertise.”

Models

Models – what this section covers:

Summary of the models – 2 charts

Model 1 Being your own broker or broker support from a relative or friend

Model 2 Circle of Support

Model 3 Brokers sharing experience

Model 4 Brokers' collective

Model 5 User-led dedicated SDS broker support organisation

Model 6 One of the activities of a wider user-led organisation

Model 7 SDS broker project within a service provider

Model 8 SDS broker support within a local authority

Model 9 Broker support as an integral part of a care service

Model 10 Broker support as an integral part of a community inclusion network/organisation or support on planning for the future

Summary of the models

Who takes on the broker role	How the broker role happens		
	Part of a wider role	Specific team	Specific organisation
Individual	Model 1 Model 2 Model 3	Model 4	
User-led group		Model 6	Model 5
Service provider, including user-led providers	Model 9	Model 7	
Local authority		Model 8	
Social inclusion or planning ahead project	Model 10	Model 10	

Summary of Broker Support Models

Model	Independent of budget setting and care services	Range of people broker/s will support	Knowledge and skills of broker	Access to specialist skills and knowledge	Quality Standards	Possible cost to person	Other sources of income	Sustainability and viability of broker support	Accountability and protection
Model 1 Own Brokerage	Yes	Is only for one person	Varies – depends on that individual	Possibly	No explicit standards	No or expenses only	None	Depends	No
Model 2 Circle of Support	Yes	Is only for one person	Can vary - but expertise and knowledge shared	Possibly	Standards may be set by circle	No or expenses only	None	Good	Informal, within circle of support
Model 3 Brokers sharing experience	Yes	Is for each person	Can vary	Yes	No formal quality standards	No or expenses only	None	Good	No
Model 4 Brokers Collective	Yes	Range of people or can specialise	Good	Yes	Possible	Likely to be expenses only	None	Good	No
Model 5 User-led dedicated SDS Broker support organisation	Yes	Usually offered to a range of people	Good	Yes, and training and support	Yes – standards for broker support	Broker time and expenses	Contract with Local Authority; grant income	Good	Yes
Model 6 Broker support offer by a wider user led organisation	Yes	Usually offered to a range of people	Good	Yes, and training and support	Yes – standards for broker support	Broker time and expenses	Contract with Local Authority	Good	Yes

Models for Self-Directed Support broker support

Getting There Discussion Paper

Model	Independent of budget setting and care services	Range of people broker/s will support	Knowledge and skills of broker	Access to specialist skills and knowledge	Quality Standards	Possible cost to person	Other sources of income	Sustainability and viability of broker support	Accountability and protection
Model 7 SDS Broker project within a service provider	Probably – if kept separate	Range of people or can specialise	Good	Yes, and training and support	Yes – standards for broker support	Broker time and expenses	Contract with Local Authority	Good	Yes
Model 8 SDS Broker support within a local authority	Possibly, but probably no	Range of people	Good	Yes, and training and support	Yes – standards for broker support	Not yet clear	Local authority	Good	Yes
Model 9 Broker Support as part of a care service	Not for that service, but may be independent of other services	Limited to people supported by that service	May vary	Yes, and can have training and support	Standards set for that service	Part of package for support	Part of overall service	Good	Yes – as part of package of support
Model 10 Broker Support as part of community inclusion network/organisation	Yes, but is part of a different type of service	Limited to people who are focus of that project	May vary but shared within the team	Yes, and can have training and support	Standards set of that project	Likely to be part of package of support	Part of overall service	Good	Yes as part of package of support

Model 1: Someone acts as broker for themselves or for a friend or relative

This is probably the most common form of broker support. It is usually an informal arrangement and many people may not even think of it as broker support.

- It can occur in any situation and can work for people with any type of circumstances.
- Each relationship is a one-off.
- It is based on trust. The person looking for support has probably asked the person acting as broker, or offering to do the role, because they know them and trust their values.
- The broker is independent of service providers and of the local authority/NHS in this role. Even if the person taking on the broker role is employed by one of these organisations this broker support role is part of their private life.
- The broker's experience, knowledge and skills can vary a lot - they may have done this before, or in another role, or they may be learning about it as they go.
- The focus is on this person's circumstances and it does not matter if the broker has limited knowledge of the needs of people with other circumstances.
- There are no explicit quality standards – the person doing the broker role does the best they can.
- The person may reimburse the broker's expenses, such as travel and phone costs, but there is no payment for the broker's time.
- If things go wrong, or the services and other support that is arranged is not what the person wants, there is no liability on the part of the broker.

"I've taken on a broker role for my sister on several occasions over the years."

"I do this sort of thing for members of the group here as part of my job. Last year my mother-in-law had a fall and needed help before she could get home from hospital. I was using my work skills but in a personal role. Our experience was that it was easy to see the different parameters and get the balance right."

"Now that you've listed it as a model, we can see that several members of the group here have had a relative or friend take this on for them. Some have worked well and others not so well – but that's true of other more formal approaches too."

"In our experience this works, but it helps if we both say: 'now Mum is going to help Joe plan for the future and arrange the support' and recognise that this is a bit different from what other mums do for other young people, and from what I do as a mum the rest of the time."

Model 2: A Circle of Support take on the broker roles for the person they support

A Circle of Support is a group of people working together to provide information support to someone in a planned way. Each member of the Circle takes on some aspects of the support roles and the overall carer and support tasks are shared. The Circle also supports each other in these roles. Members of the Circle can drop out and new people come in, but the Circle can continue to support the person through these changes. Ideally, the Circle members are mostly people who know the person as a friend or relative, rather than in a professional role.

- Each Circle is focussed on one person.
- The members of the Circle know that person well. It does not matter if they know less about the situations and experiences of other people who are looking for care and support.
- The broker role is often an integral part of how most Circles of Support work.
- The Circle can draw on more skills and expertise between them than any one person may have.
- The Circle members are accountable to each other and support each other, so there may be benefits in terms of the quality of the broker support.
- The Circle members are not paid for their roles. Many people see this role as a relationship and do not even ask for reimbursement of their expenses, although the Circle could decide to organise this.
- The strengths of the longer-term viability of the Circle, such as continuity and sustainability, also apply to the broker aspects.

Model 3: A group of people come together and share experience as brokers

The people who are taking on a broker role are each doing this for someone they already know.

- This could be a friend or relative or another member of a peer support group.
- The brokers could be other members of the local community.
- The brokers can also provide the broker support for each other.

Each broker relationship is an informal arrangement between each person wanting support and the person doing the broker role for them.

The brokers have contact with each other on an informal basis. They are sharing their knowledge and skills in supporting the people they each know.

Both the person looking for help in planning their services and support and the person taking on the broker role benefit from access to a wider range of knowledge and skills through others in the collective. They can also benefit from someone else to talk through ideas and options with – more knowledge and ideas, a fresh perspective etc.

- The broker takes responsibility for checking out the information that the others in the collective contribute.
- There is no payment but there may be reimbursement of expenses.
- There are no formal quality standards.

“I have a small network of friends who have also been doing person-centred planning and broker support for several years. We often bounce ideas off each other. I think it helps us keep on our toes.”

“I have been taking on this sort of broker role for my son since he was at school. We both know that sometimes it is better for someone else to do it, so I stand back and just be his dad. I get someone I know to help us out at these times and as a swap I’ll do some planning for them when they want a fresh perspective.”

Model 4: An organised collective of people doing broker support

This situation is similar to Model 3 happening on a more organised basis, but it is still not a formally constituted organisation.

Here, the people doing the broker support are willing to do this for people they don’t already know well. But it could still be for other members of a community group or for people in touch with a particular service.

- The people providing the broker support can reach more people – such as members of a user-led group or network, shared publicity, etc.
- The collective can use the model to be able to give broker support to a wide range of people with different circumstances. Or they can decide to specialise in being brokers for people with particular circumstances.
- The brokers can bring together a range of skills and experience – more than any one person would have.
- Even though it is not a formal organisation, they may organise themselves in a way that brings together the benefits – such as covering for each other over holiday periods, training and supporting each other in relevant skills, etc.
- There may not be the same strong existing relationships between the people looking for support and the people doing the broker roles, so there may be more risk of different understandings about the basis on which the broker support is being given.
- The people doing the broker roles may be clear about the basis on which they are doing these tasks – what level of expertise they have and the standards they work to. They may decide to work to the standards set for other projects taking on this role (see Model 5).
- The people getting support from the brokers may want to ask about the brokers’ experience and the standards they work to. But the people might not know how to or what questions to ask.

- The informal brokers group is unlikely to get any funding from the local authority or grants to cover their costs because they are not a formally constituted group.
- They could ask the people wanting the support for a payment but will probably just ask for expenses.
- The collective does not have any formal responsibility for what the individual brokers do.

“Our group has been developed on a peer support basis and we have many years’ experience to help us do this very well. Providing broker support based on the same approach and drawing on the same principles and good practice feels like the natural next stage.”

Model 5: A service user-led or family/carer-led organisation which just does broker support and advice around Self-directed Support

This model is based on the way many of the current independent organisations supporting people to use Direct Payments work.

There is a formal relationship between the person looking for broker support and the organisation, even if the way this is provided is relaxed.

- The broker is independent of all service providers as well as of the local authority.
- The broker is part of a wider team and colleagues can deal with issues when other members of the team are on holiday, have access to more knowledge and experience etc.
- The broker organisation can specialise in working for people with specific circumstances, or they can develop skills to work with a wide range of people. If they get a contract for this work from the local authority, that may require them to support anyone in that area who is looking for broker support.
- There will be clear quality standards, and the Scottish Government is expected to set quality standards for organisations taking on this role. So people asking them for support will know what to expect and be confident they have the skills to deliver effective broker support.
- The organisation is responsible for training, professional supervision and support for the brokers.
- The broker organisation will take responsibility for what the brokers do. They will also have public liability insurance and other aspects of good practice for any organisation doing work of this sort.
- The broker service may have some funding from the local authority or other places such as charitable trusts, which cover all or some of the cost of what they do. People getting support will then make a top up payment for the costs of broker support if needed.

“This is what we and many other people think of as the classic form of broker support, and I still think it has the best balance of advantages.”

“Some of our members have found that the local Direct Payments organisation does not really understand the issues faced by people who have this condition. Their expertise is in working with people who have a different range of disabilities. But they seem to know what they are doing there. We are wondering how we could work with the DP people to help them get better at working with people in our circumstances.”

Model 6: Broker support is one of the range of activities within a user-led organisation

There are many examples of this way of providing broker support across the UK in organisations that are led by disabled people. Examples include social enterprises that employ disabled people, user-led organisations which work around community networking and social inclusion and organisations which also provide collective or individual advocacy.

People are using their experience to provide peer-based broker support to other people who need care services.

- The broker service and overall organisation are independent of all service providers.
- Organisations can vary in how far the brokers understand the circumstances of the full range of people who may want broker support, or only draw on the experience of some people.
- The service would follow any external quality standards for broker support.
- This type of team often has a strong emphasis on training and professional support for the people taking on the broker role, as part of a wider focus on building up the skills and opportunities of disabled people and others who use social care services.
- The range of funding options are similar to that for any other broker team or organisations and include a contract with the local authority, other grant support and payments by the people who use the broker support.
- The accountability for the service lies with the team or host organisation.

“My worry is that they say it is peer broker support. But would it include people in the age group of our members, or people who have learning disabilities or dementia, and people who live with addictions?”

“Can user-led groups like this keep the broker support distinct enough from the collective advocacy work, or creating work opportunities? If they can, then I can see it working well.”

“Our experience is that peer support workers are effective. Peer brokers should be equally effective and would give a powerful message of hope.”

“I can see a lot of benefits in people who use services themselves getting the training and skills to become brokers, and that in turn perhaps opening up more opportunities.”

Model 7: Broker support on SDS is a specific project in a larger organisation which provides care services

There is a project or team which works exclusively on being SDS brokers. It is part of a larger organisation which provides care services.

There are current examples in the UK of teams in voluntary organisations and some in settings such as Community Mental Health Teams.

- The organisation will usually have set up arrangements to keep the broker project separate from the other activities, so in practice it is working in an independent way.
- The project should be accountable to the people who are using it to get support in planning for their future.
- People outside the organisation may be concerned that the project is not independent of the main organisation. They may be concerned that it is starting from a different value base from other broker support, that it may have some element of furthering that organisation's interests, or that it may be looking mainly at services provided by a limited range of care providers as the starting point of any care and other support arrangements.
- The broker project may support people who have circumstances that reflect those of the people who get care from the host organisation. Or they could develop the expertise to support a wider range of people.
- The project has the advantages of being part of a bigger organisation – systems to support staff, spread costs of premises and office systems.
- They should have explicit quality standards and will have to meet any standards set by the Scottish Government for broker support.
- The organisation is responsible for what the broker project does and will have insurance and similar arrangements in place.
- The financial arrangements are likely to be the same as for Model 5: contract with the local authority to deliver the service for people living in that area, access to charitable grants, other fundraising, and payments from the people using the service.

Autism Plus is a voluntary organisation based in Sheffield. They began "My Budget Brokerage" as a distinct service. The long-term plan is to establish the project as an independent broker service once it is viable.

The website for Autism Plus is: <http://www.autismplus.org/>

The website for the brokerage service is: <http://www.mybudgetbrokerage.org/>

Staff gave a presentation at an event in Edinburgh on broker support in September 2012. This is their list of reasons/benefits of broker support being a distinct project within a provider organisation with a strong carer- and user-led ethos:

- *Extensive knowledge of that service user group*
- *Extensive knowledge of the region in which the service is working*
- *Established track record on quality and contract compliance – so reassuring for local authorities and other funders*
- *Operates with independence from the rest of the organisation and other providers – how the service is organised, separate staff team, etc.*
- *Management of the financial risk – the broker service has high start-up costs and has been slow to generate income to cover the cost of the broker service, so it is more feasible within a larger organisation which already has built up reserves*

The event was organised by the Providers and Personalisation team at CCPS (Coalition of Care and Support Providers in Scotland): this programme is funded by the Scottish Government as part of the support to service providers to ease the implementation of the new arrangements around Self-directed Support.

*The materials from the event are on the CCPS website:
<http://www.ccpscotland.org/assets/files/PP/events/Brokerage%20event%20FINAL%20%281%29.pdf>*

Model 8: Distinct Self-directed Support broker support within a local authority

This model is not expected to be possible under the legislation. We have included it here to enable discussion about how different models might work.

The local authority may set up practical arrangements to keep the service as separate and independent as possible – e.g. staff doing only this work, separate management arrangements, separate location. The broker role links with the responsibilities and the skills of the local authority around care management.

- This sort of team may be more limited in the range of elements of the broker role they can take on.
- Accountability should be to the people using the service.
- It may be difficult to keep the broker support independent of other responsibilities, especially around budgets for social care and protecting the interests of some providers such as services that are part of or linked to the local authority.
- The service should work to the quality standards for SDS brokerage set by the Scottish Government and be explicit about these.
- The local authority is responsible to seeing that the brokers have the training and professional support to deliver aspects of the role, including those which are beyond the usual span of social work services.
- The local authority has legal responsibility if anything goes wrong in its roles as the employer and as the provider of the broker service.

Model 9: Broker support is provided as an integral part of providing care services

This is when a care provider gives people who use their services a lot of support to plan what kind of life they want and the practical supports that will let them do this. The care provider could be a smaller user-led care provider or a bigger voluntary organisation or private/independent sector provider.

Some of the current examples in the UK link the broker role to a care planning element of the support.

- It is in the context of person-centred support, so focussed on what that person wants and then helping them achieve that.
- It is building on the person's existing relationship with staff in the care provider – so good when staff have known the person for some time, understand how this person communicates, etc.
- The broker support can have a specialist focus, for example on the needs of people from BME communities, or for people affected by a particular illness or disability.
- The extent to which the person giving the broker support knows about the whole range of potential sources of support and has range of skills needed to be a good broker may vary.
- The organisation can draw on good practice around helping people plan ahead.
- The organisation can also take responsibility for getting staff additional training for the broker role.
- The cost of the brokerage support is part of the package of support for that person.

“This could work if the people doing it have the right values and skills.”

“There would have to be safeguards to prevent the potential conflicts of interests in this situation becoming real.”

“Part of the support we provide includes the key worker role for many people. We are already helping people look for more opportunities in their lives and encouraging them to look ahead. We should not be the broker for the service that we provide. But maybe we could take on part of the broker role for other supports.”

“There are some people we know who don't have other people in their lives who know them well and they find it difficult to get to know and trust new people. If it becomes possible for a user-led provider to also take on a broker role, this would give these folk another option and perhaps enable them to take advantage of the new arrangements.”

Model 10: Broker support as an integral part of community networks or support on planning for the future

This is where the broker support is added to the support from a team or organisation which gives advice and helps people be part of their community. Examples include Local Area Coordinators, community inclusion network/projects or organisations, Healthy Living Projects, and some voluntary organisations giving specialist advice and information to people who tend to find it more difficult to be part of their communities or welcomed into them.

- The support is already centred on the needs and circumstances of each person and staff have skills and experience in helping people to plan ahead.
- The team may be in touch with a large number of people who use community supports and care services in different ways. It is easy for people to ask for some additional support to plan and organise specific supports when they want this.
- The broker support builds on the contacts the staff or volunteers will have with a wide range of community resources and services.
- The organisation may need to find ways for the people taking on the broker support to develop skills and experience around the broker role.
- Some people within the team may develop a lot of expertise around broker support and use this to give advice and support to colleagues or work with people who need more complex or longer-term broker support. This has links with Model 4 where community brokers work as a collective.
- The way some of the main teams are organised means that people taking on the broker support will be able to keep in touch with the people who want the support over a long period.
- The quality standards are those set for the work the team already does, plus the additional standards that get set for the broker role.
- If the broker support is integral to what the team does, it is paid for through the existing routes.

“If it is implemented well, this has the potential to be truly holistic and empowering.”

“We exist to give advice to people affected by a particular health condition which is often not well understood. We already help people plan the support they need to continue being active in their communities, stay on at work for as long as they want, and to get the home care and other supports that enable them to have a good quality of life. Providing broker support would fill a gap which many of the people we know are describing.”

“For me, the huge advantage of this approach is that the people taking on the broker role are likely to think about ordinary community support and resources first and then about care services that can fill any gaps or enable the person to use the ordinary solutions. In the long-term this is what will give people a rich and good life.”

Further information

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Other discussion papers and materials form the project are on the website: <http://www.otbds.org/gettingthere/>