



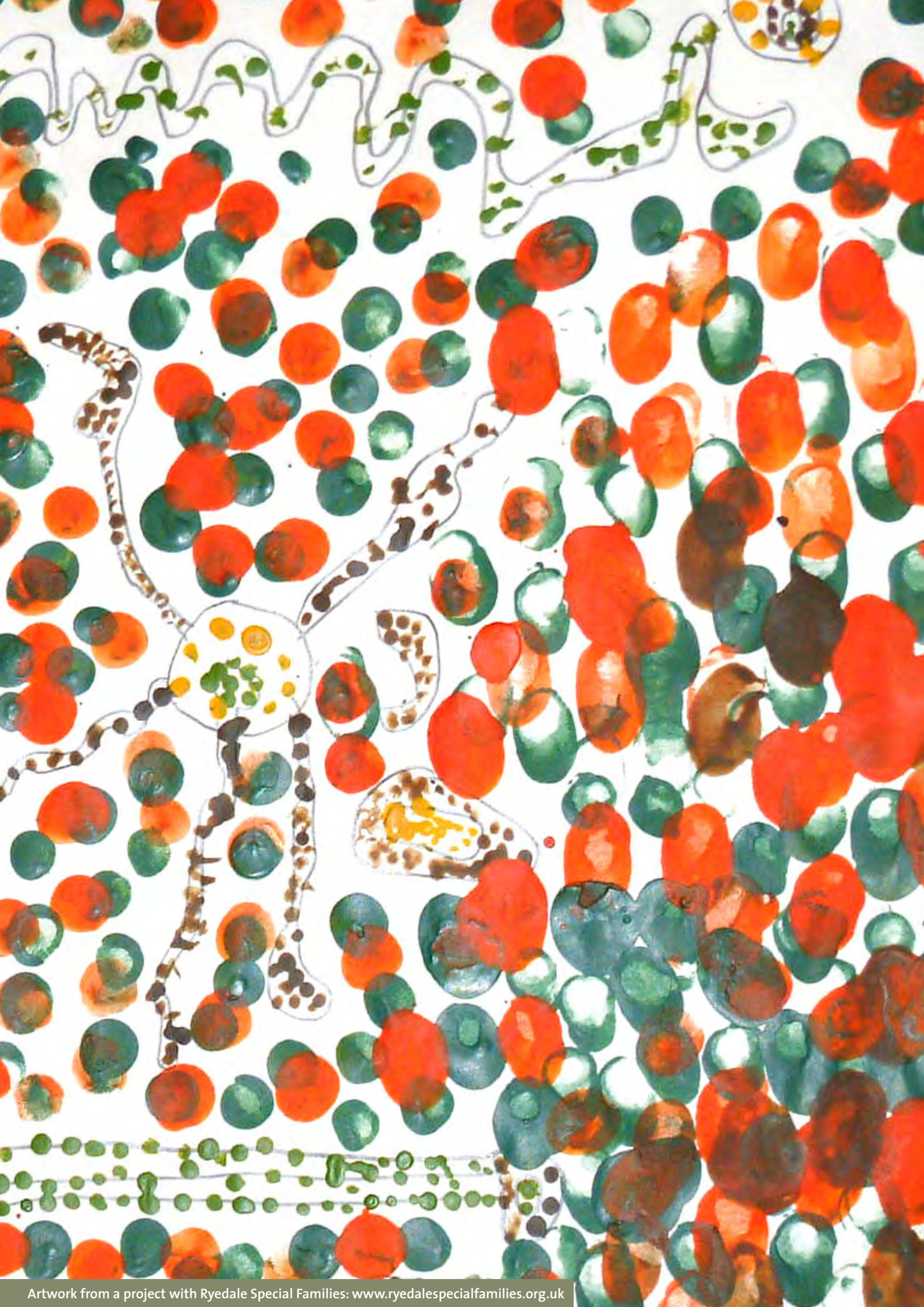
Personalisation

Children, young people and families

BRIEFING 2 | **Round table**

By Nic Crosby





Personalisation

Children, young people and families

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A big thank you to everyone who took part and contributed to the discussion – everyone’s photographs are on the front cover. In no particular order, they are: Brian Sulman, John Dixon, Timothy Kumar, Gareth Flemyng, Sandra Bate, Zubair Bawa, Julie Stansfield, Margaret Dillon, Julia Woods, Paul Connolly, Clive Miller, Jacqui Warne, Alison Upham, Richard Holland, Alison Austin, Niki Gitsham, Philippa Russell, Nicky Griggs, Sammi Crow, Charlotte Tall, Jeremy Cooper, Judith Smyth, Pippa Murray, Julie Hathaway, Clare Gent, Nathan Orchard, Jo Fitzgerald and Han Wright.

Finally, thanks to Alison Cathles, Kevin Williams and Claire Burgess who were not able to attend on the day but have since contributed to this report.

Contributions from individuals are in their own words to reflect the broad partnership of people involved in and leading the drive to introduce Individual Budgets, Self-Directed Support and the wider Personalisation agenda across children’s services.

Foreword

We all know that the current political and financial climate has created one of the most challenging environments for families, professionals and communities that we have ever experienced. However, challenge brings opportunity and the new Coalition Government has embraced and will develop the Personalisation agenda with its emphasis on empowerment, user experience and community development. Change can seem frightening to anxious parents of disabled children, who read daily about ‘cuts’ and worry about their family’s future. But Personalisation and Individual Budgets put parents – and children and young people – at the heart of decision-making.

The new agenda moves us away from assessments, which tried to fit people like jigsaw pieces into the available services. Parents, carers and users (children and adults) now have the chance to think about lifestyle and outcomes and to be more ambitious in identifying what would support them to live *‘ordinary lives’*.

The past decade has seen a welcome shift to the concept of parents as *‘expert partners in care’*, with children and young people increasingly recognised as key players in their own futures – if they, like their families, are given the information, advice, advocacy and brokerage (if they need it) to make real choices about their lives. Individual budgets, based on person-centred planning, work!

My own son, who lives in a pilot local authority, has a better life because he can make choices, look for employment opportunities, develop his interest in art and theatre while also having the security that makes us, as parents, confident about his future. In many respects the debate about Individual Budgets has distracted from the real debate about the lives people want to live and how these can be supported by a very different system of resource allocation. In what the Kings Fund recently called *‘a cold climate’* (i.e. a time of financial restraint and limited budgets), I also suspect that Personal Budgets actually offer better value for money because they deliver what families really want and use mainstream services more creatively and at least cost than their specialist equivalent.



Philippa Russell, Chair of the Standing Commission for Carers.

Personalisation is much more than Individual Budgets. It is a life-time policy direction that encourages innovation, community participation and permits real choices. Of course there are safeguarding issues. Of course some families will need support – and some may choose very traditional services. But the emphasis is on informed choice. The debate around Individual Budgets has been better developed in adults’ than in children’s services but today’s disabled children are the citizens of the future. Ensuring that they have the life

chances we expect for their non-disabled siblings must be a key priority. That must mean learning together. The public and third sectors will have exciting new enabling roles and hopefully we can look forward to a very new and exciting world.

This brave new world should be *‘liberating’* (as the Secretary of State commented about the forthcoming health reforms) but it should also promote and share positive practice and take forward the Independent Living Strategy principles of maximum independence, choice and control for all. We are all on a learning curve. But, as this report shows, Personalisation and Individual Budgets have huge potential for disabled children and their families. I hope we can learn together. As Winston Churchill famously said *‘This is not the beginning of the end, it is the end of the beginning in creating a better future for all our citizens.’*

Philippa Russell,
Chair, Standing Commission on Carers

Introduction

In June 2010, In Control hosted a roundtable discussion exploring Personalisation for children, young people and families. The meeting was held at the Action for Children headquarters in Highbury. Twenty-six people took part. People came from across the country and from the whole spectrum of interested parties. They included seven family/parent representatives, the Chair of the Carers Commission, a Director of Children's and Adult Services and people from a number of consultancy and development organisations involved in taking forward various aspects of Personalisation work across the children's world.

Individual Budgets and the wider introduction of Self-Directed Support are having a big impact on the lives of an increasing number of disabled children and families (564 as we go to print in July 2010). Individual Budgets are one part of Personalisation as is Self-Directed Support. This report documents the discussion of a representative group of people involved in driving forward the wider Personalisation agenda in the children's world.

The report shares the key themes discussed during the afternoon and includes some additional input from people invited to add their views about key parts of the discussion. Following this event, a meeting was held with a group of young people. The views of these young people have been recorded and are shared here. This report provides space for people involved in progressing this work to share their views and their hopes for the future. All those involved have experience of Personalisation and its impact on children and young people's lives, Individual

Budgets, Self-Directed Support and the challenges of transforming services to work in support of this agenda.

This is the second in a series of three reports from the In Control's Children's Programme. The first – *Personalisation: Children, Young People and Families*¹ – set out our understanding of the basis for working in a personalised and empowering way with children and young people. This report documents the voices of people with experience. The third report, to follow in September, will share an evaluation of the impact of Individual Budgets and Self-Directed Support by members of the In Control Children's Programme across the country.

With thanks to all those who have participated and to Action for Children for organising the venue, refreshments and equipment for the meeting.

July 2010

Talking with Young People

Group members: Nicky Griggs, Nathan Orchard, Sammi Crow, Charlotte Tall, Han Wright, Timothy Kumar and Brian Sulman – with support from Janine, Jack, Laurie and Mark.

The discussion with young people took place at the **My Fantastic Life** Youth Club in Ely, Cambridgeshire. All members of the group have person-centred plans. A number are involved in one part of Cambridgeshire's pilot for Individual Budgets and all had done some work in previous weeks thinking about Personal Budgets and how they would use one.

The discussion focused on person-centred plans, what young people think of them, what is really important to young people and thoughts about using a Personal Budget. Some of these concepts are quite complex and most of the group would like to talk about these things a lot more. Some ideas explained in the **Building Blocksⁱⁱ** pack were used to support our discussion.

KEY MESSAGES

- Making plans really helps you to think about the future.
- It's good to have some space away from mum and dad because you might have your own ideas.
- Being able to dream and have some hopes for the future is really good.
- Having help from Janine and Jack (My Fantastic Life) is really good.
- Having more control makes you feel stronger, more independent.
- It makes you feel more grown up.

Actual Personal Budgets meant little to the group but having flexibility and the chance to do things they wanted was very important. All members of the group were able to speak about their likes and dislikes, things they wanted to do and things which were important to them then and in the future. One young person involved in the Individual Budget pilot



felt strongly that the planning and the Individual Budget gave him a much stronger voice when it came to talking about the future. He felt that this would be really helpful for lots of other young people, too.

The well-honed self-advocacy skills of the group are largely due to the support they have been given by the My Fantastic Life workers at the Youth Clubⁱⁱⁱ. The group felt that every young person should be able to get support like that offered by My Fantastic Life. They thought that this kind of support would help young people to be more independent, stronger and have good thoughts about the future. Thank you to all who took part in this discussion and to My Fantastic Life for organising everything.



Talking with the wider Community

Participants: John Dixon, Philippa Russell, Alison Upham, Jacqui Warne, Niki Gitsham, Alison Austin, Jeremy Cooper, Judith Smyth, Clive Miller, Paul Connolly, Pippa Murray, Zubair Bawa, Sandra Bate, Julia Woods, Margaret Dillon, Clare Gent, Nic Crosby, Julie Stansfield, Jo Fitzgerald, Gareth Flemyng, Julie Hathaway and Richard Holland.



The discussion centred on three questions. Notes were kept by a facilitator on each table. The emphasis was on open and frank discussion. The whole discussion was carried out under '*Chatham House Rules*' (the discussion can be shared without attribution).

This report sets out the key themes discussed by participants and illustrates some of the points by drawing in additional information and views from other interested people.

The aim was to draw to the attention of all involved in supporting children and young people that, not only is there a strong body of work already in progress, but there is also a great deal happening across the system to ensure that children and young people, with the support of those closest to them, can direct their own lives and hence their futures.

THE THREE QUESTIONS WERE

1. What do you think of the concept of Individual Budgets as an entitlement for disabled children and their families?
2. How can we ensure that children and families stay in control of their entitlement or budget?
3. How do we take forward this agenda of Personalisation?

Question 1: Entitlements

What do we think about the concept of an Individual Budget being an entitlement for disabled children and their families?

There was a consensus in the group that having an Individual Budget had made a great deal of positive difference to children, young people and families.



What is different about having an Individual Budget for my son, Asim. Zubair Bawa

Individual Budget money is allocated according to the Resource Allocation Points System as opposed to the old system of the Social Service Assessment Care Package.

Choice is given to the child and the family about how the support plan can be written and amended according to what the child wants/needs.

There are more choices of how and where the Individual Budget money can be spent, meaning that the support the child receives can be organised in a way the child wants/needs, which ultimately gives the child control of the way he lives his life. It is evident that the Council is very broadminded by allowing/giving power to the child and parent/s to choose how the money can be spent and on what service the child wants/needs.

I have broken this down further below:

- a. The Council has worked really hard with parents to get the support plan and the basic Individual Budget structure in place. The Council has guided/supported parents all the way through.
- b. We are able to choose the 'right' support worker according to the child's wish/needs.
- c. We are able to make changes to child's support arrangements.
- d. We can feel that the child is safe and cared for in the absence of a parent.

- e. Our child has achieved, improved and learned a lot in terms of self-confidence, independence, learning skills, social development, making friends, being more active and, most of all, he is now able to catch up on the activities and things he missed in the past as a child.
- f. His physical health and emotional well-being have also improved.
- g. The Individual Budget Review is done in a simple manner but in a correct way. The child and parents can share and talk about the problems/achievements.
- h. It's good to see that the Council is seeking feedback from the child and parents about how the Individual Budget can be improved.

As parents, we get the break we need, which means a good night's sleep, being healthy – physically and mentally – and having a good quality of life.

Overall, our child's and the whole family's quality of life has improved and changed. I want to say thank you to the Social Services Department of the Newham Council and In Control for improving my son's quality of life and giving my son the Individual Budget support which he really needed.

Without your support, this would have not been possible. I really mean that.

Zubair Bawa, parent of Asim Bawa.

Zubair and his family live in Newham. Zubair manages an Individual Budget for Asim Bawa.

There was less consensus about an Individual Budget as an entitlement. It was thought that a sole focus on Individual Budgets would leave out other ways of meeting the support needs of disabled children – some of which require individual support and others which involve improving the accessibility of the mainstream world.

To see an Individual Budget as the only means would be to miss the fact that we should be pressing for a much more inclusive and accessible mainstream world – one that welcomes all children and young people. There was agreement about the need to enshrine a *'right to self-direct'* one's life and hence the support and resources available.

The group felt strongly that *'all children and young people should be entitled to a life like their peers and other children and young people'*. The group thought that such a statement highlights the fact that it is not simply an agenda for disabled children but one for all those children and young people who, for one or more reasons, are not able to live lives like others in their community – perhaps because of family breakdown, disability, health, safeguarding concerns, involvement in crime, substance misuse or issues associated with poverty. The group was united in its belief that this approach is relevant to all children and young people, that children and young people have a right to a life like others of their age and that Personalisation is the key to making this right a reality.

Personalisation impacts on many children's lives.

Claire Burgess

The notion of families being able to have a real opportunity to identify and talk about their needs, how they would like to change things for the better for their children and then having direct access to resources to do this is very appealing and seems like common sense.

The Budget Holding Lead Professional model has provided a real opportunity to do this. The key concept is that a professional close to the family, child or young person uses the common assessment to identify together what their needs are and the outcomes they would like to see to improve things. Together, they then work out an action plan that identifies who can help them meet the identified needs. This might be a friend, relative, neighbour, local community service, leisure or social activity, statutory service, a voluntary and community service or purchase of goods.

This plan does not just relate to one individual in the family but takes a holistic approach to all family needs, recognising that positive action with one family member can have positive impacts on other family members. The availability of a budget to the family through the lead professional then means that

services or goods can be individually commissioned to meet the specific needs of that family, either directly by the family or by the lead professional on their behalf.

This model has been used with a range of families with differing needs (including those living within the community with multiple needs but not meeting the social care threshold for support), children and young people with disabilities and children and young people in care. The core emphasis is on prevention, promoting resilience and enhancing the lives of children and young people and their families. Evidence from evaluation of practice has shown a significant decrease in the level of need after intervention, significant distance travelled in terms of improved outcomes as a result of intervention and high levels of satisfaction from families. Furthermore, there is evidence that this type of intervention is cost-effective and more efficient than more traditional methods of commissioning service provision.

Claire Burgess is the Principal Consultant at Local Government Improvement and development.

Prior to this Claire led work on the Budget Holding Lead Professional pilots in Gloucestershire.

Participants talked positively of In Control's model of **Real Wealth**^{iv} and how rights and responsibilities or entitlements should be linked to this model, thus acknowledging that a person's wealth is not simply about money but also about connections, access, capacities and resilience. An Individual Budget is only one small part of how people can live the life they choose.

There was some discussion, in light of the change in government, about the use of the word '*entitlement*' and whether there was a better way of describing how support needs can be met – thinking about rights and responsibilities, for instance: the right to live a life like their peers and the responsibility to participate in school, learning, family life and wider community life. The discussion about entitlements led onto the question of eligibility and also the impact of having a statement of SEN (Special Educational Needs).

The eligibility criteria used by children's and adults services were not thought to be useful. They were seen as simply a gate-keeping device. The group also thought that these criteria created difficulties by splitting children's from adult services. This discussion moved on to the use of outcomes as an indicator of whether support needs are met. Generally, an outcomes approach was welcomed although there was a request that a sixth outcome be added to the five existing *Every Child Matters* outcomes: '*To dream and aspire*'.

Taking into account all the considerations above, there was some discussion about how we ensure that children, young people and their families are offered an Individual Budget when their support needs cannot be met simply through improving access and opportunities within the mainstream/universal world.

Parent carers participating in the discussion felt that, without an entitlement or right to an Individual Budget, not much would change and they would continue to have little or no control over how their son or daughter is supported.

KEY MESSAGES

- All children and young people have a right to expect a life like that of their peers and other children, including their participation in learning and school life, an active family life and the chance to make use of the opportunities open to all children and young people in the mainstream/universal world (for example, leisure centres, sports activities, shopping centres, holidays).
- An Individual Budget is a powerful and necessary tool to be used where the child or young person is unable to participate in mainstream activities and the opportunities available in the wider world. However, an Individual Budget is only one part of the Personalisation agenda and one way of meeting specific support needs. The whole system, as enacted by commissioners (and evidenced in the Total Place pilots^v), needs to be reshaped to offer support to all children and young people. Individual Budgets will remain within this re-shaped system as a valuable tool.
- Without a right or an entitlement to an Individual Budget, how can families feel confident they will be offered an opportunity to take control over how their child is being supported?

Question 2: Ensuring choice and control

How do we ensure that children and families have control over their entitlement or budget and how it is used to meet their son's or daughter's support needs?

Participants discussed the skills needed by all involved in supporting children and families with Individual Budgets. A strong case was made for the central role of schools in supporting the learning of these key skills.



Schools are central to making Self-Directed Support and Individual Budgets work. Jacqui Warne

Self-Directed Support and Individual Budgets may well have the potential to be the cavalry coming over the hill to help rescue our flagging economy – as long as we grasp the opportunity to do it well and do it thoroughly and not dabble nervously and ultimately create a double system of services.

Schools have a clear duty to prepare children and young people for this level of empowerment. How can our young people commission services if the only choices they have had in school equate to *'Would you like orange or blackcurrant?'* (with the aside *'If s/he says blackcurrant, give her/him orange – he/she doesn't really like blackcurrant'*).

In our school, we have been totally committed to person-centred approaches for over five years. It has culminated in every child having in place a set of person-centred processes that we call the *'core promise'*.

This core promise consists of:

- a person-centred plan
- a personal profile
- a communication system
- a decision-making process embedded in teaching and learning
- a service level agreement between home/school and the child/young person for setting

skills-based/outcomes-based targets. In the final stages of their school career, it includes an individual learning budget to resource their transition plan.

There are two key objectives that schools need to achieve in order to effectively prepare young people for Self-Directed Support:

- a. Develop the ability to effect systemic change through person-centred processes. Learn to use the voices of children and families to influence school improvement and to drive innovations.
- b. Proactively teach children how to make decisions or provide the means to facilitate accurate advocacy, according to the individual. We can do this by being clear about decision-making as a teaching and learning process, breaking it down into making preferences, making choices and making decisions. We need to be honest about which of these we are enabling our children and young people to employ on a regular basis.



Jacqui is Head Teacher of the Ellen Tinkham School, Exeter. The school is open to disabled children from the age of three to nineteen. The curriculum, its focus on self-direction and the approach to supporting young people to prepare for adult life at Ellen Tinkham have been highlighted as good practice.

Personalisation is not simply a case of learning skills needed to direct one's life and how one is supported. There needs to be a nationwide sharing of what

is possible backed up with strong evidence of the impact of Self-Directed Support on families' lives and services' practice and finances.



What happens when you share what is possible? Pippa Murray

The words '*Individual Budget*' become meaningful to children, young people and their families when they learn what can be done with those budgets and how they can make a positive difference to family life. Many parents express anxiety about the concept of being given an amount of money to spend and feel unsure about how to spend it. Anxieties melt away when they hear stories about the difference it is making to other families and the very ordinary things they can buy.

For example, hearing about the play equipment one family bought for the garden that allows a very active disabled seven-year-old to play while Mum gets on with cooking the tea, and her other two children have friends round to play, gave another mum the idea of buying a trike for her daughter.

Sharing images of possibilities helps families think about what might be possible, rather than what

is ordinarily available through disabled children's services. It is a big leap for families to make. They are moving from the experience of being offered two nights a month at a residential respite care unit to being given money to help them buy the help they need.

And it is not just about spending money. Individual Budgets are only one aspect of Self-Directed Support and it is important that we remember to share the examples that families come up with of making connections within local communities. For example, the story of a 13-year-old girl going to guides supported by her sister and a friend gives others the idea that they could do something similar.

Pippa works with In Control and runs her own company, *ibk initiatives*^{vi}. She supports services and families across the country. She works with schools, children's services, disabled children and families.

Giving families information, supporting creative thinking and developing skills goes some way to helping them find their voice. However, the way that professionals generally interact can be disempowering. We need to place the child and their family at the centre of planning, using the support plan as the single focus. In order for this to happen, '*back office*' systems – assessments, recording, monitoring and audit – have to be brought in line with the change.

The starting assumption, until proven otherwise, has to be '*families know best*'. There needs to be a move from a deficit-centred to an asset-based approach – one which is appreciative and invites participation and working together.

Workforce development was discussed and brokerage mentioned. The role of a broker was

queried by some who expressed the view that brokers were needed because of a system failure as opposed to a system change. A number of stories were shared by people with experience of Individual Budgets and the wider use of individualised funding by Budget Holding Lead professionals. These stories all suggested that significant efficiencies could be achieved by moving away from using specialist services to encouraging a more accessible universal/mainstream world.

Key to progressing this agenda is the development of a new relationship between families and professionals, as highlighted in *Personalisation: Children, Young People and Families*. A new relationship offers the possibility of reacquainting social workers with the reasons they entered the profession and reducing the disempowering dependence of families on children's services.

Personalisation is not just about Individual Budgets – it’s about relationships. Alison Cathles

Social care for children and their families is about establishing a truly personal relationship between worker and family. It requires each worker to sit down with each family without any preconceptions about ‘families in their circumstances’ or ‘very good services’ for children with a particular diagnosis. The worker needs to see him or herself as a contributor on equal terms, a co-producer with knowledge and skills to share.

The statements below show that a new relationship is possible.

‘It is a great relief to us to deal with someone who acts not only with professionalism but also genuine understanding and caring.’

PARENT OF DISABLED CHILD TO COMMUNITY LEAD PROFESSIONAL

‘X cut through our hostility by not promising us the world, by offering empathy not sympathy, by being objective and not patronising. She spoke to us on a professional level and not the special needs level that seems to be pasted onto parents who have children with special needs (they must have special needs as well!) which we had experienced with previous workers. We are indeed lucky to have X.’

PARENT TO MANAGER OF COMMUNITY LEAD PROFESSIONAL TEAM

‘Thank you for taking so much time to discuss matters today. Your practical and understanding approach is certainly helpful and empowering as you do listen to the difficulties and offer information voluntarily to make informed decisions.’

PARENT TO COMMUNITY LEAD PROFESSIONAL

In tandem with this focus on the relationship between worker and family, the bureaucratic systems around workers and resources need to be responsive to this level of Personalisation. Commissioners and business managers need to remove as many barriers as possible that prevent family and worker from implementing creative solutions. This includes making all budgets as flexible as possible, driven by evidence of achieving outcomes rather than by restrictive eligibility criteria.

In this context, the Individual Budget itself provides a more transparent system for allocating resources, which is helpful in managing budgets and creating a more equal partnership with families. However, it is only a mechanism and does not in itself provide more choice and control for families.

Alison is Commissioning Project Manager and Aiming High Lead for Children’s Services in Gloucestershire.

In the past year, Alison has worked as part of the In Control Children’s Team, supporting members in the south of the country.

The challenges of taking forward this agenda with a workforce that feels under pressure from recent safeguarding failures and worried about the impact of possible budget cuts were discussed. There was discussion about some of the positive practice in children’s services. It was thought that the Common Assessment Framework, when used in an appreciative way, supports the development of a new relationship, in which families will feel listened to and see that their views are central to any planning that follows.

Work to date across both Self-Directed Support, by the In Control’s Children’s Programme and work on individual commissioning and budget-holding has relied heavily on a few committed and passionate individuals within services. Strong leadership is needed but has often been one of the blocks to this agenda being taken up. Commissioning is central to the development of Personalisation. Below, Judith Smyth describes how leadership should be located within commissioning.



Commissioning is central to making Personalisation work for children and young people. Judith Smyth

All the evidence from Personalisation, Individual Budgets and Budget Holding Lead Professional pilots identifies lack of leadership support as one of the barriers to change. Directors of adult and children's services are lead commissioners whose job is to shape the whole system, through radical change if needed, in order to ensure that all services are efficient, effective and user-led. Personalisation involves whole-system change and new ways of budgeting. If we are to move it from the margins to the mainstream, commissioners need to take the lead.

We discussed how strategic commissioning teams are now starting to use the principles of Personalisation, co-production, radical efficiency^{vii} and Total Place to redesign local systems. Bringing these together with

all the good evidence about what works and what does not work^{viii} and testing emerging policy and plans with service users and carers is a potent force for change.

We asked whether localism means that local leaders should not wait for national guidance. If not, we agreed that, by going through a proper evidence-based commissioning process, it may be possible to avoid the worst consequence of the inevitable budget cuts.

Judith leads work on Children's Services and Commissioning at the Office for Public Management and is the Director of the Commissioning Support Programme.

We moved on from talking about commissioning to discussing the role and importance of the voluntary sector and providers. Participants thought that very few organisations in the children's world were actively engaged in thinking through what Personalisation

might mean for them. Below, Kevin Williams, Chief Executive of KIDS (represented by Julie Hathaway at the discussion), sets out the direction of travel for KIDS as a provider of support and services for disabled children and young people.

Personalisation might work well for families but it's a big challenge for a service provider. Kevin Williams

Although KIDS is committed to inclusion, person-centred planning and the rights of individual disabled children, all our structures were, until recently, based around services and not people.

KIDS has been shaped by the following parameters:

- The local authority is our customer.
- We provide '*wholesale services*' which are purchased in bulk by the local authority.
- We are highly regulated.
- Our marketing is aimed at 150 local authorities.
- Our finance systems are geared up to manage low numbers of large value invoices.

- We are accustomed to contracts being stable for three years.
- Our staff '*learn on the job*' in group settings.

For KIDS, Personalisation means:

- The disabled child/family is our customer.
- We provide '*retail services*' which are purchased individually, family by family.
- These services may be lightly regulated.
- Our marketing is aimed at 700,000 disabled children.
- Our finance systems need to manage high numbers of small individual transactions. Customers will buy what they require when they need it – no guarantees.
- Our staff will be working on their own – and need in-depth training.

KIDS is taking the following practical steps

- A new national database of every child we work with so that we can relate to every family and efficiently feed into national eCAF.
- Staff training to emphasise meeting the needs of the family.
- Raise the profile of KIDS amongst families – don't focus on local authorities.

- New accounts software system and setting up credit card booking system.
- A new web-based booking system – www.directshortbreaks.org.uk – for families to book KIDS one-to-one support whenever they want it, at the time they want.
- A new E-earning package for KIDS staff.

Kevin Williams is the Chief Executive of KIDS

The group discussed some of the barriers and challenges facing Individual Budgets and Self-Directed Support. There were many concerns about

... safeguarding, particularly following publicity around a number of system failures in keeping children safe.



Safeguarding and Personalisation – a single agenda.
Gareth Flemyng

The current political and financial climate is creating the most complex and demanding environment (in living memory) within which we have to deliver a safeguarding agenda.

When we look at the issue of *'keeping children safe'*, a perspective is being promoted that suggests the Personalisation agenda contributes to risk. This is entirely false!

Firstly, traditional services are not necessarily safe or free from financial fraud. There are undoubtedly commissioned services and in-house practitioners who are not delivering support to individual children as intended. Placing control with individual children and their families increases the level of accountability and acts as a control measure in avoiding fraud and abuse in the majority of cases.

Secondly, a commissioned team of staff delivering tailored support via an Individual Budget that follow a child/young person throughout their day minimises the number of workers intervening directly in a child's life, supports the development of specific expertise, increases accountability and acts as a control measure in reducing risk.

However, the contribution that the Personalisation agenda has to offer *'mainstream'* safeguarding services is probably the area where we could make the greatest impact on children's safety.

The Personalisation agenda creates a capacity to redefine our safeguarding interventions, to re-examine our assessment of need and risk and to move to an entitlement model that is also capable of identifying issues of malice and intent, empowering children and their families to make fundamental and material changes in their lives. Creating Individual Budgets and opportunities for co-production between the state and families to deliver solutions to risk is only just beginning to be explored from a practice and policy perspective. In the current financial climate, we increasingly need to develop and support family-based solutions to social care problems including issues of keeping children safe, because the fact of the matter is the budget will not be available for longer term state-based solutions!

Personalisation: better, cheaper and safer!

Gareth is Head of Safeguarding and Assessment at Newham Children's Services.

The challenge of ensuring that families and children have control over how they are supported and how they access opportunities and activities is a challenge to the whole system. It is clearly not simply about giving people Individual Budgets (although these are crucial in many instances) but also about developing

new skills, helping families raise their expectations of what might be possible, changing the way professionals and families work together and creating wider activities led by commissioners and providers. These are the key messages to be taken from this discussion.

KEY MESSAGES

- Schools are critical to offering children and young people the chance to develop skills for directing their own lives as they grow into adulthood.
- Sharing stories of what is possible with families is an important part of giving them the opportunity to take control over how their son or daughter is supported.
- A change in the relationship between professional and parent/family/child is a key factor in the success of Personalisation for children and families.
- Commissioners have a leadership role in ensuring that Personalisation as a whole system change is taken forward.
- Self-Directed Support – through its solutions-focused approach, its emphasis on inclusion within the local and wider community and the tailoring of support to the individual needs of the child and family – **is** a safeguarding agenda.

Question 3: The future

How can this agenda be moved forward?

Three themes emerged in this discussion: communities and people, local authorities and national government.

Much of the discussion returned to earlier points about the importance of making sure that people know their rights and responsibilities, of ensuring they have access to information about what to expect, how they will be supported and when they may have access to an Individual Budget. The group recognised that tackling these issues begins with promotion and mass awareness – targeting everyone, not just those currently in receipt of support from the local authority.

Some had concerns about the fact that, till now, Personalisation has been associated simply with Individual and Personal Budgets. They thought that this narrow focus omitted sections of a larger agenda and did not make the most of local communities, people's own networks and other resources that an individual has to draw on. Local communities and community organisations were thought to be important partners in Personalisation, which should be described as a whole-system approach.

Discussion returned to the need to gather evidence from across the children's world of the impact of Personalisation. It was acknowledged that the Department for Education-funded *Evaluation of Individual Budget Pilots* contributes to this evidence base, but this evaluation did not cover the wider impact of Personalisation as a whole system-approach. Many organisations attending, including In Control, have access to important evidence about the wider impact of Personalisation. If this evidence were brought together, it would answer many questions raised in the discussion. There was a strong sentiment that this collating of evidence should be done and the product shared with the sector (i.e. this would be 'sector-led' support to all within the children's world).

The current drive for efficiency and the proposed large-scale budget cuts clearly need to be acknowledged and built in to all our discussions about Personalisation. Gareth Flemyng's phrase, '*Personalisation: cheaper, safer and better*', was thought to encapsulate much of the discussion and was considered to be a useful phrase that we should not feel shy about using.

A number of points were raised which should be included in discussions with a wide range of people including local and national leaders:

- It is a matter of living ordinary lives not extraordinary lives.
- The improvement in outcomes for children and families is better for the country as a whole (carers under less stress means less demand on services).
- This is an '*invest to save*' agenda.
- Better outcomes are achievable for the same money.
- Families who were previously excluded are now becoming more articulate about how their son or daughter needs to be supported – empowerment in action.
- It is more cost-effective to get it right first time than to have to fix something later.
- Personal Budgets make it clear and transparent what is available and what you can get up front.

The whole group felt there was a need to engage with people across services and communities, to ensure that families, children and young people are part of the discussion and that a shared understanding should be forged about how the agenda can be taken forward.

This understanding should:

- have a clear evidence base that covers Personalisation in the work of children's services
- share stories of the impact of the different initiatives and developments on the lives of children and families
- set out the ambition and vision as well as the pathways to support
- describe the rights and responsibilities for children, families and those services involved in their lives.

This agenda sets a clear expectation of an ordinary life for children and families. It will put in place a

structure that all evidence suggests can and will translate into a changed reality for children, young people and their families. Taking this agenda forward will mean developing a single and comprehensive

bank of evidence about the use of individual funding alongside the wider work of voluntary and private sector providers, commissioners and local and national leaders.

Summary

This event provided a great opportunity for many people involved in Personalisation work with children and young people to share their experiences and thoughts. Members of the group thought that the sooner they are able to discuss their work with the new government the better. It was thought that there is a risk that much of this work could be lost if it is not highlighted as an example of innovation, improvement and investment in efficiency. This report describes the discussion and will be shared across all the networks made available by participants in the discussion.

KEY MESSAGES FROM THE WHOLE DISCUSSION

- Personalisation for children and young people has the potential to be '*cheaper, safer and better*'. Maintaining our existing approach to supporting children and young people with additional support needs will neither support families and children in ways that make sense to them nor deliver the government's efficiency agenda.
- Child- and person-centred approaches to planning, backed up with an Individual Budget, offer young people the chance to begin exploring the world in which they live, give them the tools to become more independent, to experience the world of work and to begin having their own ideas about their lives and their future.
- There is a chronic lack of awareness within the children's world about Personalisation, Individual Budgets and Self-Directed Support. There are many mixed messages and myths surrounding the whole agenda.
- Personalisation has the potential to contribute to a '*big society*' agenda by promoting the inclusion of all in this society and working to end segregation and exclusion.
- Self-Directed Support and safeguarding go hand-in-hand as opposed to working against each other. Being more visible, being supported in individual ways by a small number of people and participating in the life of the local community are all central to safeguarding and Self-Directed Support.

The group did not want to see the continuation of the current approach to supporting children and young people with additional needs. We may be able to draw on the strengths and good practice in, for example, appreciative use of the Children's Common Assessment Framework, learning from the Budget Holding Lead Professional and Individual Commissioning work and experiences in using

post-16 learning funding in more individualised and flexible ways. The whole group, however, spoke with a clear voice about the need to progress Personalisation as the underpinning approach to giving all children the chance to take part in society and their local communities – to be safe, healthy, enjoy learning, think positively about the future and make a contribution.

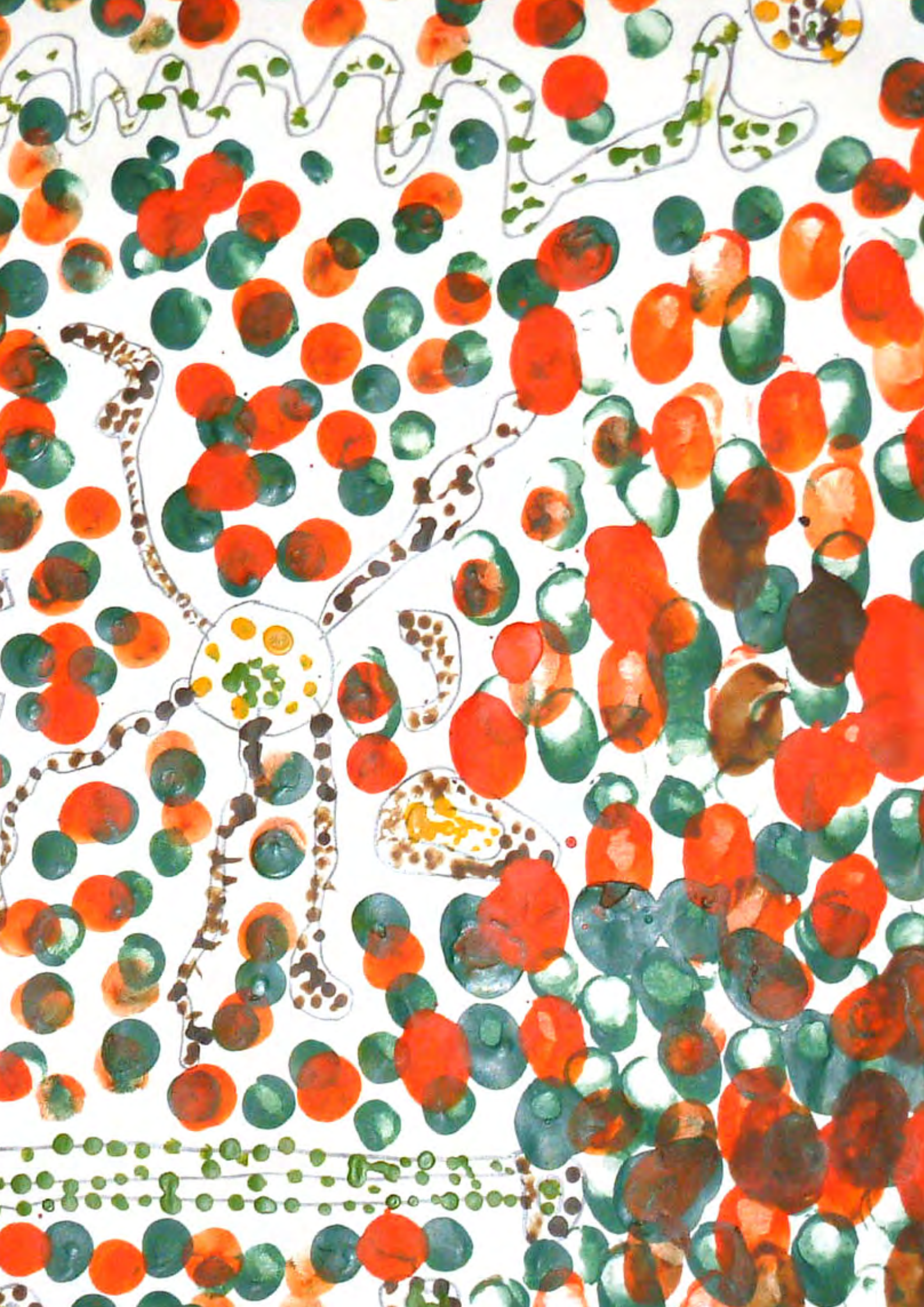
Participants

Participants in the discussion:

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Department of Health
Sandra Bate, Parent, Halton
Zubair Bawa, Parent, Newham
Paul Connolly, In Control Children's Programme
Jeremy Cooper, iMpower
Sammi Crow, My Fantastic Life
Margaret Dillon, Deputy Chief Executive, Action for
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John Dixon, Director, Social and Caring Services, West
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Disabled Children, Halton Children's Services
Jacqui Warne, Headteacher, Ellen Tinkham School,
Exeter
Julia Woods, In Control/Parent
Han Wright, My Fantastic Life

Endnotes

- i *Personalisation: Children, Young People and Families – Our Learning*, Crosby, N, In Control, 2010
- ii *Building Blocks: A Resource for explaining Individual Budgets, Self-directed Support, Choice and Control to young people with learning difficulties:*
www.incontrol.org.uk/site/INCO/Templates/Library.aspx?pageid=171&cc=GB
- iii My Fantastic Life – Cambridgeshire
www.becauselifeshouldbe.com/contacts.html
- iv Real Wealth: first described by Crosby and Duffy in *A Whole Life Approach to Personalisation*, In Control, 2008. Explored further in *A Report on In Control's Third Phase*, Tyson et al, 2010 and *Personalisation: Children, Young People and families*, Crosby, In Control, May 2010.
- v Total Place
www.localleadership.gov.uk/totalplace
- vi www.ibkinitiatives.com
- vii NESTA and Innovation Unit, June 2010
- viii Sources such as NICE, CHIMAT, SCIE, C4EO





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In Control

In Control is an independent network for social innovation. It develops, tests and shares ideas that can reform the welfare state and promote citizenship and community. It is a small organisation, but it supports an extensive network of organisations:

- adult social services departments
- children's services
- NHS Primary Care Trusts.

In Control is also a member of In Control International which has sister organisations in Australia, Czech Republic, Northern Ireland and Scotland.