



Promoting Variety learning exchange events:

Opportunities to engage with *Promoting Variety* and embed market shaping / facilitation in practice.

Thursday 28th October 2021 NOTES

INTELLIGENCE

Background

This event is the **first** of three, designed for sharing practice to improve the choice and provision of short breaks.

Stage 1: Intelligence gathering intelligence about existing provision, gaps, aspirations, and available resources.

Promoting Variety: background and updates

Promoting Variety was updated in 2021. It will help implement Independent Review of Adult Social Care recommendations and SDS principles (Scotland).

It provides systematic ways to improve choice in short breaks:

- Developing an understanding of people's needs and preferences
- Testing what works and what doesn't
- Forming plans that provide this in sustainable ways.

Implementing Variety: recent research and learning from practice

This summer, we ran focus groups with Local Authority commissioners and produced [this report](#) with the key learning. Today we heard from two commissioners about the importance of carer involvement, noting:

- Working together takes time and commitment. Co-production requires negotiation, compromise and give as well as take.
- It won't happen on its own, it needs structure and support.
- It helps avoid expensive mistakes from 'commissioning-led' models, learning from and testing things with carers from the start. (This is a vital message to senior managers who worry about 'opening the floodgates' to unknown demand).
- Creativity comes when carers are 'allowed to dream', with examples of what's possible, beyond what they've had before.

Practice sharing – group activity

Intelligence and involvement – where do you get yours?

How do you gather and analyse data and who can help with that?

We explored these two questions from the 'intelligence' stage of market shaping, with notes summarised below.

We already have lots of evidence e.g. of past demand and needs assessments. But:

- Do we think of it as evidence?
- Is it collated and used?
- Have people spoken *and* been heard? Facilitate this, don't just rely on existing data. Go where they are.

Mosaic not jigsaw: you can make a coherent picture with different sizes, types and quality of evidence.

Triangulate information from big data sets (like the carers census, DWP records of Carers Allowance claims) against what you know locally (e.g., carer support plans/young carer statements completed, number of short breaks provided.)

Gather new data, e.g., run surveys and follow up with carers focus groups to help interpret the data. Beware survey fatigue – what's in it for carers and will things change as a result?

Use it! Qualitative information and stories help give carers (and others) examples of what's possible, beyond their image of a 'short break'.

Think creatively: carers, commissioners and providers can all benefit from examples and exploration to think beyond what they already know.

- Short breaks may not be part of people's vocabulary. Ask more open or meaningful questions about outcomes e.g. 'If you weren't caring, what would you like to be doing?'
- Talk to non-commissioned services: could they help take demand off more specialist groups?

Increased variety and choice: measures and indicators of progress?

We agreed with the research's observation that better ways of measuring short breaks, outcomes and progress towards 'variety'.

- How do commissioners 'count' short breaks if they're non-traditional, or not called 'respite' or 'breaks'?
- Do we ask about outcomes, the difference breaks made?
- Find ways of capturing the great stories that are happening, so they can be shared. 'Stories are so powerful – we need to collect, share to help other people aspire to opportunities!'
- Qualitative data is rich and just as important and quantitative, particularly with personal outcomes.

So in that spirit... Some of the **Creative examples** we shared:

A peer group of carers in Neath and Port Talbot got a grant from the regional partnership to help fund a shared holiday. They supported each other as well as the partnership supporting them.

Bridging the Gap respite scheme: <https://www.newcis.org.uk/btg/>

Payroll services and third-party banking services to reduce the admin of individual budget. May be available from Independent Living Services. A local example: <https://www.encompassborders.com/services/payroll/>

A carer's centre was provided with additional funding to increase the number of short breaks they could offer directly.

Nurturing peer support and co-delivery of 'breaks' with carers.

The ScotSpirit Holiday Voucher Scheme via Shared Care Scotland

<https://www.sharedcarescotland.org.uk/scotspirit-holiday-voucher-scheme/>

Also, an information map of Local Authority Short Break Service Statements <https://www.sharedcarescotland.org.uk/map-page/>

This new paper from Wales provides set of key principles for guiding co-produced vision for short breaks <https://carers.org/downloads/wales-pdfs/carers-trust-road-to-respite-report.pdf>

In North Wales carers are not given a Direct Payment but are allocated a 6-monthly budget code which can be drawn from as and when needed from a variety of options.

A campaign to raise awareness of the Carers Rights (Wales) Act has included printed pharmacy bags for prescriptions which includes information on carers rights and where to go to find more information. In the recently published Carers Action Plan in Wales, one of the key priorities is the identification of carers

In North Ayrshire, schools offer and complete Young Carer Statements – the place where children spend the majority of their time.



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Thursday 27th January NOTES

IDEAS

Background

Commissioners and carers find it increasingly hard to access appropriate choice of breaks and services. Challenges include the availability, flexibility and sustainability of service providers; constrained finances; workforce capacity; risk; internal processes and regulation. [Promoting Variety](#) provides systematic ways to improve the choice and provision of short breaks.

This is the **second** of three half-day learning events to help:

- Understand and remove barriers to variety short breaks
- Identify and share creative practice examples
- Ensure a pipeline of ideas to stimulate new thinking – and action.

Each event is themed around one of the three stages of market shaping.

Today's theme: Ideas.

The current system is not designed for the flexibility that people need of it. The solutions to these problems will therefore break or change the rules. At the Ideas stage, we create space for potential solutions to be proposed and explored.

NOTES

1. Promoting Variety: background and updates

- The guide was updated late 2021 to reflect on the pandemic, the Feely Review and the SDS Framework Standards (Scotland)
- The three stages are not linear, they're a dynamic cycle that can start anywhere. Carers should be involved in shaping things at every stage.

2. Implementing variety: learning from practice



Donna Murray, Social Work
Scotland: using the *SDS Standards*.

[Click image to download Donna's
presentation.]

Jennifer Campbell, NHS Highland:
Creative approaches to *Direct Payments*
and reimagining short breaks

[Click image to download Jennifer's
presentation.]



Message to carers and workers: *'Just do things differently and we'll support you with that.'*

'Budgets are never the issue, there's always a solution, even very small things make a difference. The beauty of those things!'

Costing personal outcomes is not easy. How can we do that better? Jennifer worked out an equivalence, capping a maximum budget at the equivalent amount as six weeks' respite.



Scott Fissenden, Fife HSCP: exploring
a *Community Chest* for carers.

[Click image to download Scott's
presentation.]

'We don't have the answers but we know what carers tell us'

'We are prepared to see risks being taken.'

3. Practice sharing – themes from group activity

The ideas the speakers shared worked because there were good links between HSCP policies, Community Planning and community opportunities.

Time and space are needed for meaningful conversations with carers about options. Many carers centres are developing capacity and skills through brokerage or bureau type services. Independent Support (like brokerage and advocacy) is increasing in prominence.

Services describe themselves as risk averse. How can they become risk-positive and realise that their aversion to risk is actually a very risky aversion to *change*. Data and evaluation are important here.

Small amounts of money can make huge differences. Today's examples include: massages; wellbeing sessions; a garden memorial; a conservatory

heater to create a break space; an iphone to track where people are; gardening and gym equipment. [Other creative examples are here!](#) Presenting alternatives like these can open up creativity.

The ideas are out there, people just need capacity to think about them – and permission to use them!

Having young carers on grants and assessment panels can increase engagement.

Budgets for short breaks vary (in the group, they ranged from £1k to £4.5k limit). Longer term, budgets and sharing need resolved - how resources are split between carers and cared-for.

Other ideas

Unless the cared-for person is having a successful break, the carer will not feel that they themselves will have a break.

A group-break for carers where their loved ones are also being cared for at the same time. Cheaper accommodation linking to good transport links, a good alternative to expensive holiday homes.

Figuring out how to use Day Services during covid has been excellent and innovative – not able to use the space, but how to use the service.

Significant amount of funding during Covid being awarded. Hope that the monies are sustainable because they've been fully appreciated.

There are so many alternatives out there! Long term care is not the only answer!

Ideas to take away from today

- Pooling of innovations for Promoting Variety network to share
- Carers Co-operatives (more on this in March!)
- Community Chest
- Setting the context for carers by sharing examples of what others have done with budgets
- Straightforward, simple, accessible processes
- Good grass roots examples, good conversations are happening between services and carers. Permissions are being given 'despite' rather than because of the system
- Measurement – Current measures don't give us the how and why (qualitative) just how much
- Overnight care options
- Balancing creativity with capacity to care
- Being creative with the models of respite to support carer user and carer most effectively
- Reaching carers in changing circumstances – young carers with children, school-aged carers, working carers. All those are falling through the gap, along with others who may not see themselves as carers

- More conversations between Finance colleagues and workers and carers and how we can together get a shared understanding (pink tape) about a 'good outcome focused finance process'



Promoting Variety learning exchange events:

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Thursday 10th March 2022 NOTES

IMPLEMENTATION

[Promoting Variety](#) provides systematic ways to improve the choice and provision of short breaks in three stages of market shaping or facilitation.

Today's theme: Implementation

The Implementation stage is where ideas are put into action to shape short break opportunities. It is part of an iterative cycle, linked to getting [intelligence](#) about what carers and supported people want and need from short breaks, and [ideas](#) for how that can be achieved. This is the **third** workshop in our series of three.

NOTES

Background and update

The [Implementing Variety report](#) shares good practice in market shaping and short breaks from 14 HCSPs. It also presents results from a desk-based review of evidence from every HSCP area. Many of the themes identified by today's speakers reflect the report's findings on the 'Implementation' stage:

[Local coordination and action planning helps](#): e.g., Carer Strategy Implementation Groups or short break working groups.

[Bureaucracy in balance](#): providing scrutiny *and* space for creativity.

[Trust and relationships are everything](#): within HSCPs; with other HSCPs; with carers; with the third sector and commissioned organisations.

[Commissioning consistency](#): develop outcome-based commissioning approaches and address inconsistent access to breaks.

[Investing in carers support](#): Identify where responsibility for carer support fits, then resource it e.g., with a worker, bureau or hub to coordinate short break advice.

[Drivers of change](#): The Carers Act and the Feeley Review put the spotlight on supporting carers. Like *Promoting Variety*, they give a framework and impetus to drive changes.

[Leadership](#): collaborative commissioning strengthens relationships with commissioned organisations and with carers. Support experimentation and testing of different approaches, understanding that some of these won't work.

([More information on collaborative commissioning is here](#)).

Implementing variety: Learning from practice

Edinburgh Health and Social Care Partnership

Emma Pemberton, Care and Support Manager, Disability Services
emma.pemberton@edinburgh.gov.uk

'Promoting Variety gave us a dialogue, a national framework to work with. It showed the IJB it wasn't something we were doing in isolation.'



Click the image to download the story that Emma and colleague Robert Smith shared, about using Promoting Variety to increase the number of providers and variety of breaks available.

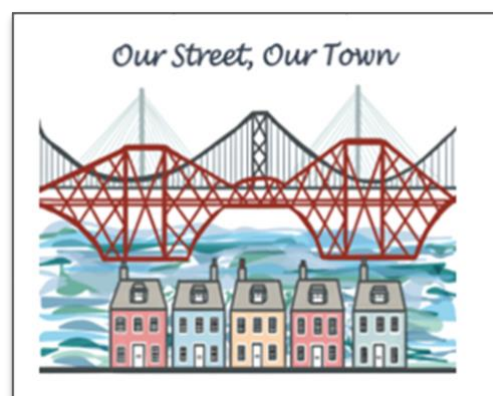
Emma and Robert also reference the [Inspiring Breaks Toolkit](#), which provided creative ideas for breaks.

Lindsay Graham, EDG Care Cooperatives

Click the image to view Lindsay's slides: bringing local people and businesses together and building their capacity to provide creative short break opportunities.

Find out more via:
<https://www.edgcarecooperatives.org/>

www.networksq.com



For EDG's *Confident about Disability* training contact:
clairemedwards@hotmail.com

For their community brokerage work, email: Lindsay@edg-sco.org

For information on national Community Brokerage SVQ awards:
<https://communitybrokeragenetwork.co.uk/about-us/our-work/>

Practice sharing discussion

Promoting Variety says:

The Implementation stage is where ideas are put into action to shape short break opportunities. As with the other stages, using it as an explicit, iterative opportunity for learning is vital. This will help to ensure continuous improvement, quality and effectiveness. It will help to avoid the possible unintended consequences of commissioning decisions on the wider market.

Market shaping takes time to build trust and achieve culture change. But you can start by accepting or allowing 'good enough' market shaping plans and interventions. It's important to be ambitious but also realistic, for example by planning and funding small tests of change.

Today's discussion prompts:

- **What is the local appetite for doing things differently? What is the risk appetite?**
- **What opportunities can you take to engage with colleagues e.g. in procurement, legal and finance roles?**
- **What are the long-term risks of carers not accessing breaks because services don't meet their expectations?**



**What is the local appetite for doing things differently?
What is the risk appetite?**

Resistance to doing things differently sometimes come from senior managers. Data and evidence are useful, but sometimes less persuasive than pressure from carers, and subsequently from elected officials, about fulfilling duties.

- **How can carers be better supported to challenge and hold HSCPs to account?**

Some HSCPs are aware that there will be no consequences if they do not meet their duties under the Carers (Scotland) Act, which can lead to a low appetite for change or doing things differently. For example:

- **One HSCP noted that local eligibility criteria for carers support have never been reviewed, despite the statutory guidance stating that this should happen every 3 years.**
- **One of the few times an HSCP felt pressure to respond to scrutiny was when they were publicly challenged about how Carers Act funding was being spent.**

The National Care Service proposals for accountability for social care (and right to respite) to sit with a Minister might result in better

accountability and implementation of Carers Act and provisions of short breaks in the long term.

Carers can sometimes be resistant to changes in the way in which their cared for person is supported, having had the trauma of fighting to get support in the first place. The thought of losing this for a new service or 'unknown' approach can be difficult to process.

- Conversations with carers could be more trauma informed.
- How can we help carers and families who are unused to having freedom or flexibility to think about alternatives?



Promoting Variety contains a tool to influence conversations around risk and change - Red/Blue rules

Red Rules: Rules that cannot be broken (legal requirements). Red rules may seem rigid, but they often have a certain amount of flexibility built in to allow for interpretation and adaptation to fit with local need. Understanding legislation, particularly around procurement, helps you to recognise the built-in enablers which can influence wider change.

Blue Rules: keep operations running smoothly (custom and practice). Blue rules are generally established through interpretation of red rules, opinions of those in leadership, and by the cultural norms around how people expect to work. Establishing new ways of working with regards to blue rules can cause a lot of uncertainty for people and therefore create resistance to change. It is important to think about risk from the perspective of your stakeholders.



What opportunities can you take to engage with colleagues e.g. in procurement, legal and finance roles?

The responsibility for carers being empowered to talk to IJBs about change and improvement should sit with carers. We need good ways of working for everyone.

Likewise, front line colleagues aren't usually the ones who are risk averse. We can influence other colleagues by enabling carers' voices, making sure they have the tools and resources they need.



What are the long-term risks of carers not accessing breaks because services don't meet their expectations?

Have conversations about the 'what ifs' with the person/family/worker and provider (if there is one). Provide examples of risk and mitigation to promote an approach of risk enablement if the risks are reasonable and understood by those undertaking the break.

All three questions come down to relationships. There's now a shared appetite to do things differently (and therefore accept risk). Promoting Variety is part of a coherent movement, all going in the same direction: carer-led, outcome-focused and collaborative.

Next steps

We have created a proposal for developing and implementing Promoting Variety into 2022/23. We will share updates once we know the outcome.

Visit the webpage to keep up to date:

<https://www.sharedcarescotland.org.uk/resources/tools/promoting-variety/>

Thank you!

To everyone who has brought Promoting Variety to life in this programme: all our guest speakers, Think Tank members and participants from around the country, thank you!