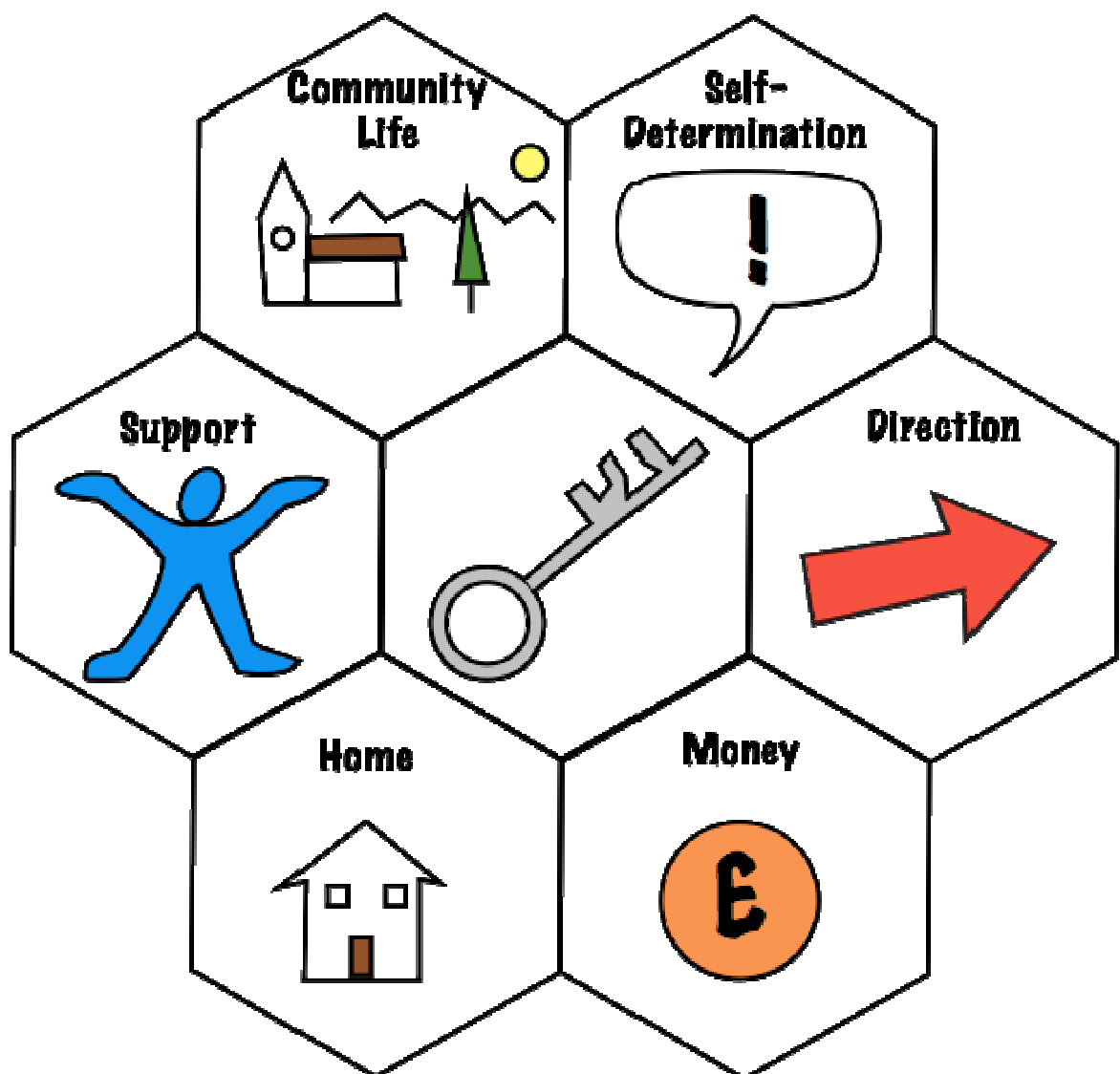


Self Directed Support

People's stories



Individual Budgets is a National programme to change the organisations of social care in England so that people who need support can take more control over their own lives and fulfil their role as citizens.

The logic is, if the support a person receives fits them better, it will improve their lives and the communities in which they live.

Part of the role of the Self Directed Support team is to capture some of the experiences of people who are directing their own support.

In doing so, this will help everyone to learn more about the programme and ultimately make people's lives better.

Hearing or reading about the lives of individual people is a good idea because :

- Stories are a very powerful and direct way of telling everyone what a person's life is really like.
- It is easier to remember stories about individual people rather than plans, policies and service systems.
- We can generate lots of learning to help us improve the way we do things
- You can sense the real creativity that individuals can bring with just a bit of good information.

The stories that you will read are just a few examples of how people have been taking control in Barnsley.

Thankyou to the people who gave us the permissions to share their stories.

Amy's story

Amy found that directing her own support has made a big difference in her ability to continue to live as active a life as possible.

I am a 91 year old lady. I am very independent and intellectual. I worked full time as a lecturer until I retired.

My health took a downward slide after having a series of falls and I started to need more extensive care.

I went to a residential home to have some rehabilitation; I felt like a fish out of water, my health started to get really poorly and I felt sad and lonely.

A social worker mentioned Direct Payments to me and she arranged for someone from the Direct Payments Support Service to come and talk to me

I decided it was a good idea and went ahead to get it organised so I could get on with my busy life.

I employ 2 carers, one who lives in and my Direct Payment pays for an agency.

Having a Direct Payment has really made a difference to my life, it has enabled me to keep my independence.

Because of the direct payment and the care I purchase privately I feel alive and look forward to the future

I teach my classes and remain in my own home.

In 2006, I got the Queens award for voluntary work I have done at Huddersfield.

Katie's story

Katie has been directing her own support for about six months now and has recently participated in a DVD to help others to understand what it means.

As a young lady with a learning disability Katy spent many years moving from supported living to supported living accommodation and was never very happy. The support was never right and felt that the support workers were not working with her but working 'at' her, Katie moved back in with her mum but after a couple of years decided to move into her own flat. She managed to get a flat near to her mum who lives just two doors away.

Katy moved into her own place in May 2006 and the social worker talked about an Individual Budget.

Katie completed a self assessment and had help from her Social Worker to write a support plan.

Katie has a budget of around £9,700 and this was for a full year. Katie used her budget to employ a personal assistant for 19 hours a week.

The Support Service helped Katie out with recruitment and she employed 2 people but they didn't work out. She now employs one person for 19 hours and is really happy with the way its all working.

If her p.a is off sick then Katy has an agreement with her mum and sister that they would help out, Katie also has someone else who can help.

Katie says, 'I now do my own shopping and do more housework. I am thinking about going to the Goth week in Whitby next year and am making some plans to go abroad. I want to be able to swim in the deep end and not be afraid and try to not let things bother me so much.

Both Katie and her mum are happy with the way Individual Budgets are working.

Mum feels that she can now step back and feels confident for Katies future.

Katie describes Individual Budgets as 'lovely, it's made me feel more confident, I feel very independent and it's totally flexible'

Katy is happy to talk to anyone about her experiences and says 'Go for it ! '.

Carol's story

Carol's father talked about what Carol's life was like before.

Carol is a severely disabled lady who is a wheelchair user using adaptations to control her environment as she has no movement in her arms or hands. She lives independently in her own home with 24 hour support.

Carol lived with me and had carers from agencies who came in and slept every night with some pop-in calls during the day. I got remarried and Carol stayed in the house with 24 hour care. Carol would go into respite 4 times a year but we both thought that her needs weren't being met so we stopped it. Staff that came in from the agency were untrained and inconsistent.

The social worker mentioned Direct payments and Carol wanted to give it a go. She wanted to live an independent life and thought this was the way she was going to achieve it.

Carol did her own care plan, advertised and then recruited 8 personal assistants and used money from Social Services and the Independent Living Fund to pay for them.

Carol says it is working fantastically, there is more stability, she knows who is coming and when, she does her own rota's which are done months in advance so she can make plans.

The personal assistants have been trained by Carol and her family and two of them are doing an NVQ.

. Carol said
Go for it, it will change your
life and make you more
independent.

You will get good care
because it's the care you
have chosen. It makes you
realise what you want from
your life.

Linda's story

Linda is the mother of two boys aged 6 and 9. Both boys have aspergers syndrome, one of her sons also has Attention deficit Hyperactivity Disorder.

It was getting to be a a struggle so I contacted Social services who suggested Direct payments. I decided to give it a go.

I already knew someone who was good with the boys and who I trust so I set about working with the Direct Payment Support Agency to employ someone and I now get support for a few hours a week which enables me to have a break when my husband is away with the Merchant Navy.

It makes a difference for me as I can have some time to myself to do something I want to do and not what the boys want to do.

Its been very flexible and you can tailor it to your needs, the paperwork is something I could do without. As a busy mum who works part time and goes to college, has disturbed nights and sleeps with the boys I could do without it.

I manage to cope with the help of the Support Service.

Kieran's story

Kieran's Mum and Dad talk about the families journey so far.

Kieran is 39 years old and has severe learning difficulties.

Kieran used to go to a respite centre for a few weeks a year, we didn't get any choice about the dates but were told when they would be. He also goes to a day centre which he still enjoys.

Things became difficult with the respite service – he always seemed to be poorly whenever we went away or we would get telephone calls to ask us to go in so it was no respite.

We were already getting support from the Independent Living Fund and the Social Worker spoke about Direct Payments.

We decided to employ some carers to come to the house to

look after Kieran while we go away.

We now have 2 carers and 4 bank carers for emergencies. We had some help from the Support service and now we can manage it on our own.

Kieran is so happy and we feel so much more settled now and able to go away. Kieran has no disruption to his routine.

We recently went on a cruise for three weeks and we did not worry as we knew Kieran had been well looked after, going to the pub and having a good time.

When we returned Kieran looked 10 years younger !

We are so happy we wouldn't change a thing. Our plan for the future is for Kieran to remain living in his own home with support, and for us to move out when we retire. We never thought that this could happen but now it can.

Julie's story

Julie is an older lady who has had a stroke which has affected her left side.

I now use a care agency for a few hours a week to help me with some of my personal care.

When in hospital the hospital social worker talked to me about Direct Payments.

I am very happy. My family do the financial monitoring and we can now manage on our own.

Someone visited from the Support Service to talk to me and my family.

We all feel reassured and have piece of mind.

Bob's story

Bob is a gentleman with a physical disability living with his wife May.

Bob used to get support from an agency but the arrangements were so inflexible and there were too many different faces.

They decided to try a Direct Payment and were a bit terrified about setting it up ! They received some support with this and found it wasn't a problem at all.

They now employ two personal assistants who have worked with them since the start and are very flexible to cover holidays and sickness.

An example of this is if Bob goes to daycare and May goes out. She knows that she doesn't have to rush back for 4pm as she can arrange for one of the p.a's to be there.

Continuity of carers is important, it means that a relationship can be built so that you can talk about issues or problems, and not feel as if you are opening your house up to strangers.

Over the coming months the Self Directed Support team will be working with people who are in receipt of Direct Payments to enable them to have even more choice and control through Individual Budgets.

Sharing people's stories will be an essential part of this journey.

For more information about Self Directed Support you can visit :

www.individualbudgets.csip.org.uk

www.in-control.org.uk

in addition a new network has been established to support local partners to further develop self directed support, visit

www.sdsnetwork.org for further information

For more information, contact the Self – Directed Support Team on 01226 772425