

Personalisation of services

There is a growing consensus about the need for a personalisation of services, however there is debate over what form this should take. Personalisation has so far focused on consumers, promoting individual choice, partly through opening up markets to competition (see [bringing markets into public services {1}](#)). However another approach focuses more on citizens, arguing for user empowerment with users being involved in the shaping and co-production of services. (See [empowered consumers {2}](#)) It remains to be seen how this agenda will be taken forward.

What are the implications?

- Closer relationship between users and professionals has the potential to strengthen ties and collaboration.
- Personalisation and user involvement in developing services may result in unrealistic expectations and [dissatisfaction with services {3}](#).
- Greater accountability of organisations to individuals and citizens.
- An increase in [direct payments and individual accounts {4}](#) that give users greater control.
- A focus on individual choice taken to the extreme may damage collective action.
- Changing [attitudes towards the welfare state {5}](#) as people increasingly approach services as consumers rather than citizens.
- [Public services opened up to markets {6}](#) and [hybrid organisations {7}](#) develop to better meet the needs of different individuals.
- Differentiation in services contributes to inequality between local areas.
- Increase in [inequality {8}](#) as those unable to make their voice heard are marginalised.
- Increased [public participation in decision making {9}](#).

Moving forward

Users increasingly expect to be given opportunities to influence providers and shape the services they provide. With an interest in user voice and involvement, the VCS have a competitive advantage.

- To what extent is your organisation prepared to listen to and involve your users?

- Do you feel confident that your organisation fully understands your users and their needs?
- Do you capture learning and knowledge from your front line staff?
- What role do your users have in feeding into your future strategy?
- Other sectors are getting better at listening to and involving their users/customers. How can your organisation demonstrate your experience and expertise in this area and retain your competitive advantage?

Personalisation of public services is increasing the number of options open to users:

- Can you provide advice and help citizens to negotiate the wide range of options available?
- What is your role in ensuring marginalised voices are heard?

Want to know more?

[Person-centred support: what service users and practitioners say {10}](#)

Published by: Joseph Rowntree Foundation – a social policy research and development charity.

Date: 2008

Format: Web

What is it? A summary of their recent research report investigating the success of service personalisation.

How useful is it? The research focuses on service users' perceptions of person-centred approaches, investigating meaning, paths for success, potential and actual barriers, actual experiences good and bad, and therefore outlining models for success. A useful document for examining what personalisation means to customers themselves and providing good practice examples and suggestions.

Other comments: Centres on disabled people, but the findings are largely applicable to other service users. Complete document available as an e-book and to buy.

[Making it personal {11}](#)

Published by: Demos - a left of centre think tank

Date: 2008

Format: Web

What is it? A report advocating transforming public services into self-directed services.

How useful is it? The report follows a policy statement in December 2007 promising a more personal approach to social care. The report examines why participative approaches are attractive, how and why they work, risks involved in adopting this approach, challenges involved in transferring this approach to mass services, and how far personalisation could spread into other public services such as health and education. A useful examination of the pros and cons of self-directed services, including recommendations on making it work.

Other comments:

[The User generated state: Public services 2.0 {12}](#)

Published by: Charles Leadbeater

Date: 2008

Format: Web

What is it? An article discussing the potential reach of personalisation of services.

How useful is it? This article looks beyond the social care setting that is the usual focus of the service personalisation debate, and uses proven models of success taken from recent technological advances such as Web 2.0, to explore the wider potential and implications of user-led services. It outlines five principles of success, examines risks involved, and ends by illustrating how this approach could potentially improve society for the future.

Other comments:

[Our health, our care, our say: a new direction for community services {13}](#)

Published by: Department of Health

Date: 2006

Format: Web

What is it? Government white paper on reforming community services

How useful is it? The paper sets the agenda of governmental policy regarding community services, moving towards personalised, user-led services. It sets the context for the changes, outlines the improvements aimed for and explains how they will be achieved.

Other comments: Reports examining the agenda one year on for the VCS are also available [online {14}](#).

Links

(1) <http://www.3s4.org.uk/drivers/bringing-markets-into-public-services>

(2) <http://www.3s4.org.uk/drivers/empowered-consumers-information-society>

(3) <http://www.3s4.org.uk/drivers/satisfaction-with-public-services>

(4) <http://www.3s4.org.uk/drivers/direct-payments-and-individual-accounts>

(5) <http://www.3s4.org.uk/drivers/attitudes-towards-the-welfare-state>

(6) <http://www.3s4.org.uk/drivers/bringing-markets-into-public-services>

(7) <http://www.3s4.org.uk/drivers/hybridisation-of-charities>

(8) <http://www.3s4.org.uk/drivers/poverty-and-inequality>

(9) <http://www.3s4.org.uk/drivers/public-participation-in-decision-making>

(10) <http://www.jrf.org.uk/knowledge/findings/socialcare/2258.asp>

(11) <http://www.demos.co.uk/publications/makingitpersonal>

(12) <http://www.charlesleadbeater.net/archive/public-services-20.aspx>

(13)

http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Publications/PublicationsPolicyAndGuidance/Browsable/DH_4127552

(14)

http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Publications/PublicationsPolicyAndGuidance/DH_075491

Related drivers

- [Attitudes towards the welfare state](#)
- [Bringing markets into public services](#)
- [Poverty and inequality](#)
- [Direct payments and individual accounts](#)
- [Empowered consumers/information society](#)
- [Public participation in decision-making](#)
- [Satisfaction with public services](#)
- [Hybridisation of charities](#)

History

This driver was last updated on 13/08/2008 and prepared for Jon Burke at 13:12 10/11/2008.

Rights

Released under Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial-Share Alike License (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/2.0/uk/>).

References

Find this driver at <http://www.3s4.org.uk/drivers/personalisation-of-services>.

Find Jon Burke's member profile at <http://network.3s4.org.uk/members/jonb>.
