



Case Study:

Co-designing a pathway to self-directed support for people who have mental health problems



Scottish
Co-production
Network

Background – Self Directed Support in Scotland

The Social Care (Self-directed Support) (Scotland) Act 2013 went live on the 1st April 2014 and the implementation of the National Strategy is well under way across Scotland.

Pilotlight is part of the ‘Changing Support, Changing Lives’ programme that aims to support providers to make the transformation to self-directed support in Scotland. It does so by working with co-design teams of people who use and deliver services across Scotland to design pathways to self-directed support.

Pilotlight is hosted by the Institute for Research and Innovation in Social Services. IRISS’s role is to promote positive outcomes for the people who use Scotland’s social services by enhancing the capacity and capability of the social services workforce to access and make use of knowledge and research for service innovation and improvement.

In Moray, the aim was to co-design a pathway to improve access to Self-Directed Support (SDS) for people with mental health problems. Moray Council were undertaking a self-directed support pilot but had not managed to involve people with mental health problems.

It took the opportunity available to bring in the design and facilitation experience of the IRISS Pilotlight facilitators to set up a co-design team involving council health and social work staff, Scottish Association for Mental Health (SAMH), people who access support and an unpaid carer to help it look at how it engaged with people who had mental health problems around self-directed support.

Pilotlight had specific intended outcomes, mainly:

- To identify barriers that hinder access to self-directed support and encourage organisations to overcome these.
- To deliver collaboratively designed services and produced services and support.
- To increase the capacity of support providers to deliver a greater variety of self-directed support and services.
- To lead thinking on designing better services.

Ultimately Pilotlight will produce a service blueprint in the form of a ‘how to’ guide which will detail the co-design process, the service design tools used, the outputs from each of the pathways and some key learnings.

There were key underlying principles that guided the work, including:

Participation and inclusion – everyone, no matter their impairment, could contribute to the Pilotlight pathway.

Non-discrimination and equality – every member of the co-design team had an equal voice and was given the respect and treated with the dignity they deserved.

Innovation and practical application – there was a focus on looking at how services could be delivered differently but that whatever came out of the co-design process should be likely to succeed or be effective in real circumstances.



Starting points:

At the initial workshop the Pilotlight facilitators explained Pilotlight and the purpose of the project. The group, referred to hereon in as the co-design team, also explored people's understanding of wellbeing, their knowledge of mental health services in Moray and their assessment of existing self-directed support services. Participants also agreed how often and when they would meet and how they would work together in and between the workshops.

The co-design team also produced a 'Working Together Agreement' covering general principles to guide working together, mutual commitments in terms of preparation and attendance, conversational courtesies and communications and media matters.

Beginning to work together:

Subsequent workshops spent time looking in more detail at self-directed support from a range of perspectives. This involved research undertaken by some of the co-design team in between workshops with friends, family and community members, practitioner experience and desk research undertaken by the Pilotlight facilitators.

Based upon the research findings, the co-design team agreed the themes they wished to work on.

They then developed 'character profiles' of people who might use and deliver SDS. These acted as guides for thinking about the goals and desires of people who access support and in turn helped guide decisions about the service that the

co-design team might make. They also used role play, focused on various scenarios, to help illuminate the characters and to stimulate other ideas for co-designing solutions to the issues they had previously identified.

The Pilotlight facilitators played key roles during these early sessions to facilitate shared understanding amongst the group on a range of SDS topics and issues and stimulate a culture of 'equality' in terms of contribution of ideas. They also managed a range of practical tasks, including recording and writing up notes from workshop discussions, planning ahead for future sessions and keeping in touch with people between workshop sessions.



Developing the new pathway:

After the co-design team had developed the 'character profiles' these were used as the basis for producing more detailed 'design briefs' and 'prototypes.'

Participants split into 2 sub-groups to look at information and assessment themes. The information group examined and prioritised ideas for how information could be better provided and made more accessible.



The assessment group reviewed the Council's current self-assessment questionnaire and suggested changes based upon ideas generated through the character profile development.

At this point, the Pilotlight facilitators brought in the IRISS Creative in Residence to work with the whole co-design team to develop their ideas for an information campaign. The [‘pick ’n’ mix’ animation](#) that they developed has since



been adopted by the Scottish Government and is available nationally through the web and app version of the SDS User Guidance which was published before the Act went live.

Co-design team members did ‘homework’ between workshops and then shared findings and ideas at the full workshop sessions. Learning from others’ experience was also important and in this respect they also watched a video case study created by Stockport Council about personal budgets for people with mental health problems.

The co-design team then adopted a similar character profile and design-led approach to looking at the themes of ‘Learning and Development for Mental Health Practitioners’ and ‘SDS for People

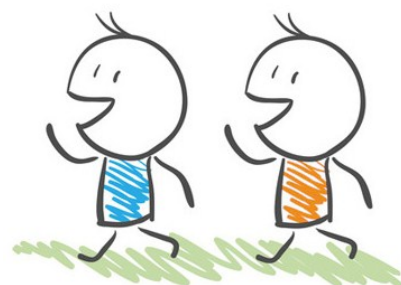
with Fluctuating Conditions.’

The Learning and Development Group considered what practitioners might need to learn about SDS, fears they might have in working with people who access support and how they could be supported in improving their learning.

The Fluctuating Conditions group focused on advance planning by those who access support in times of crisis and what kind of risk management strategies might be put in place to help. They also looked at how SDS money could be managed for people with fluctuating conditions. The group then discussed how members might like to showcase the work that had been done in all 4 working groups during the Pilotlight project.

Some volunteered to showcase the project at the forthcoming Moray Feel Good festival, a Moray Council information day for service providers and 3 of them also participated in an annual IRISS Champions event. The Pilotlight facilitators introduced their creative design colleagues into the group at this stage to help develop products to help showcase the project.

The Pilotlight facilitators also did a huge amount of ‘homework’ during this latter phase. This involved working up 5 full ‘Design Briefs’ to capture the group’s ideas for re-designing key elements of SDS in Moray and liaising with their knowledge media colleagues to create a showcasing video involving some group members.



Challenges:

A number of challenges arose during the course of the project:

- Helping everyone in the early stages learn how to communicate and work together productively whereby all views and ideas were equally valued.
- Ensuring everyone had sufficient information and understanding of social services and SDS to enable them to contribute fully
- Making sure that everyone shared in the responsibility to make the project a success – by attending regularly, doing work in between workshop sessions, testing out ideas with others and helping showcasing the project.
- Enabling all participants to understand co-design principles, relate their specific activities back to the overall ‘double diamond’ framework (see diagram on page 7 below) and appreciate and value co-design as way of working in partnership.
- For some people who access support, getting over initial feelings of being scared, nervous and having nothing to contribute.
- For providers, changing their perceptions of people from ‘service users’ to that of equal partners who can offer insights and bring other valuable experiences and skills.

Outcomes:

The main outcome from this co-design process was the growth in confidence of all members as they realised that they all had important but different contributions to make. This was a key feature of the lessons learned (see below) by various members of the group.

The other major outcome is having 5 Design Briefs that are considered all the better and more capable of practical use and implementation because they have been co-produced by service providers in the Council and voluntary sector, working together on an equal basis with those who use SDS and their carers.

The 5 Design Briefs are:

- An accessible information campaign based upon a ‘pick ‘n mix’ theme.
- Guidance for Moray Council to develop an Individual Service Fund for people with fluctuating conditions.
- Content and methods to deliver SDS learning and development.
- A revised mental health Self Assessment Questionnaire, guidance and scripts for a practice simulation tool.
- Advance planning for SDS “add on” to support planning.

These are also represented in the diagram overleaf.





An accessible information campaign based on a Pick 'n' Mix theme



Access to self-directed support for people who have mental health problems



Advance planning for SDS 'add on' to support planning



Guidance for Moray Council to develop an Individual Service Fund for people with fluctuating conditions



A revised mental health SAQ, guidance and scripts for a practice simulation tool



Content and methods to deliver SDS learning and development

Finally, there is also a legacy of greater knowledge of co-design and co-production from the experience of 'doing it' that can be shared and built on locally but which has the potential to be made available for others to learn from across Scotland.

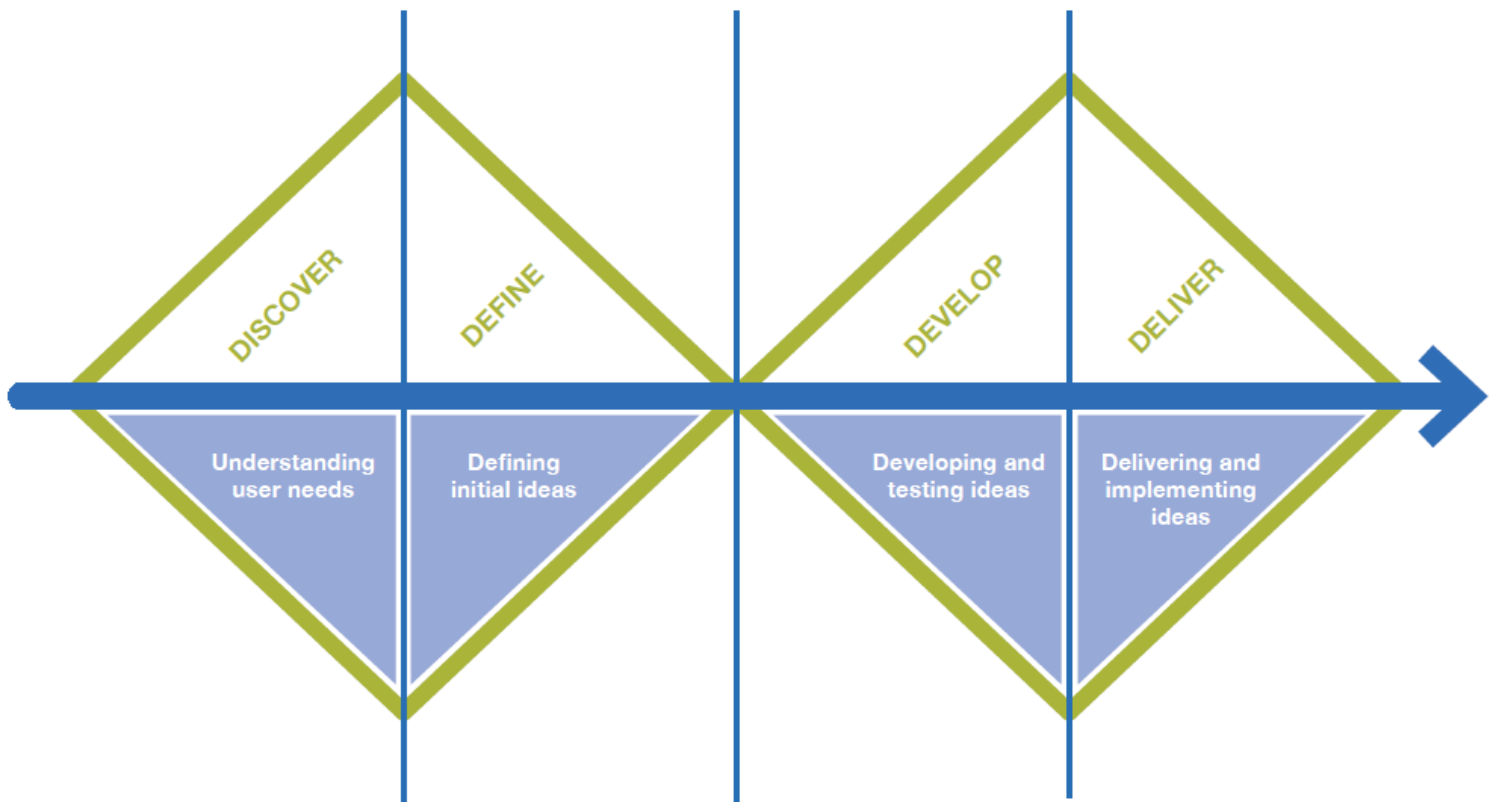
This project demonstrated co-production in practice by using a co-design framework as the basis for improving access to self-directed support in Moray for people with mental health problems.

Judith and Kate, the Pilotlight facilitators,

worked with a co-design team comprised of support providers, people who access support, carers and other relevant statutory agencies and local organisations over a period of 8 months in a series of workshops.

The visual nature of the design process is presented overleaf.





Why is this co-production?

The different ways in which co-production was put into practice are described below:

Assets

People who access support and carers were key members of the group set up to develop the new Pathway. They led much of the community research work that shaped the service design briefs and were pro-active in developing new prototypes, particularly the bespoke self-assessment questionnaire for mental health. The project actively sought to capture their knowledge and experience of SDS and used them to tap into a wider pool of people who can access support.

Capacity

From the outset the Pilotlight team sought to foster a culture and a partnership of equals.

Individual people who access support and carers were treated no differently from other group members in terms of the value of their ideas.

They were encouraged and helped to contribute to group decisions, be active in showcasing the project and in accepting their share of commitments and responsibilities for the successful operation of the workshop sessions and wider project.

Mutuality

The key incentive for people who access support was the opportunity to contribute innovative ideas to re-designing SDS in Moray.

There was also an incentive to put less than positive past experiences of involvement with service providers behind them and work jointly with them in a co-design process.



Practical incentives to aid their participation were also on offer: where some tasks required additional time commitment, the project offered a financial payment (e.g. if participants posted on the Pilotlight blog). A fee and travel expenses were also paid to enable those who access support and carers to attend workshop sessions.

Networks

By recognising the experience and wider connections of those members of the group who access support and carers, the project was able to test out its ideas with wider family and community networks.

People who access support and carers were also able to make use of other community networks to help showcase the project.

Providers engaged with, and tested out ideas, within their work teams, bringing in the IRISS staff at key points in the project.

Shared role

No one partner was considered to be the lead member, control what should happen, when and how during the project. In similar fashion, no one person or body was seen as being the “expert” or having all the ideas or resources for devising solutions to the challenges or issues identified by the group.

The work of the project was deliberately organised in mixed pairs, working groups and the links with wider networks made equal use of professional networks (e.g. experience in Stockport), as well as local Moray family and community networks.

The use of “creative tools” such as

“character profiles” helped everyone participate on an equal basis and be valued in their own right rather than by any title or organisational role.

Catalysts

The Council recognised that it needed to improve access to self-directed support in Moray for people with mental health problems.

It used the experience of the project to help improve its own SDS pilot currently operating at the same time.

Key staff have realised that they do not have to find all the answers or take all the responsibility to improve the service but rather work more in partnership with those who use the service, enabling them to help shape it and make more of the expertise of users and wider family and community networks.

Is the project current? / When did it take place?

The Pilotlight project took place between January – September 2013. The project as such has finished and the new products are now in place and related processes being implemented by the local partners.



Are there any key areas of learning from this experience?

There were a number of important lessons - about what makes for more effective pathways to self-directed support for people with mental health problems and also what makes for a successful co-design process.

More effective pathways to self-directed support:

“Experiencing the co-design and co-production process – using people’s experience and knowledge in ways that helped build people’s confidence.” (Mental Health Practitioner)

“Realising that people with mental health problems have a different set of needs and that our questionnaire can’t be generalised to different client groups.” (SDS Support Worker)

“It’s made me think I could do this on a personal level, so I have decided to go to college to do events coordinating, but I just think that I have got a brain here in my head and that it can be a productive brain.” (Day Centre Service User)

“The co-design really worked because it put everybody on an equal footing, everybody has the same value, there’s no one person’s opinion more important than anybody else’s.” (SAMH Service User)

“It’s been great that by working along with people who, I suppose I would have seen as ‘service users’ before and working along with them as partners, the insight they have offered me to their experience of using our services has just been massive.” (Service Manager)

“For me it’s seeing the service users who have been involved in the process, I have known a lot of them for a long time and to see them take control and flourish and for their ideas to be taken on board has been a great success.” (SAMH Service Manager)

Achieving successful co-design:

In this particular project the co-design team members from Moray used the design and facilitation skills of the Pilotlight team in IRISS.

That enabled **other important lessons about co-design** to be learned:

Invest sufficient time in the whole project, not just the “contact” time with participants. This means time for research and designing a process that works for all the partners.

Work in between the delivery sessions is vital – it helps everyone think ahead, keeps people engaged and everyone comes better prepared to subsequent session.

Using the “double diamond” framework was a useful tool – it provided a clear visual of the process to be worked through, reminded everyone of the stages reached and helped people engage.

Make time at the start for listening and developing understanding amongst the participants. Be prepared to use creative tools to remind people of any ground rules agreed and to ease the process of participants learning to work together.

Develop a “working together” agreement – this helps anticipate individual goals



and is a useful reminder to check progress against intended outcomes.

Don't be afraid to use "creative tools" – they can provide simple but effective ways to achieve the purpose of specific exercise or discussion and act as a deliberate link back to the overall process.

Think about the combination of skills sets that may be needed – ideally, combining design skills with facilitation skills and knowledge of the topic but also considering what will help achieve effective facilitation with mixed ability groups.

Further information

This case study was produced by the Scottish Co-production Network, Scottish Community Development Centre, Pilotlight, IRISS and the ALLIANCE as part of the People Powered Health and Wellbeing programme.

The aim of the People Powered Health and Wellbeing programme is to ensure that people are able to influence their services and supports for their own health and wellbeing, and to contribute to the design, delivery and improvement of support and services (including through peer support.)

- www.alliance-scotland.org.uk
- www.coproductionscotland.org.uk

The Pilotlight video and more information about the project can be accessed at www.pilotlight.iriss.org.uk

The Pick 'n' Mix SDS accessible information video can be accessed at <http://www.pilotlight.iriss.org.uk/self-directed-support>

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IRISS FM, the internet radio for Scotland Social Services has produced a programme which provides an audio recording of the Pilotlight project and an overview of the first Pilotlight Pathway in Moray.

This can be accessed at <http://irissfm.iriss.org.uk/episode/058>

