



Transcript:

[Music Playing]

The Social Worker’s Perspective

Ellie Namih: Personalisation and the reward for me would have to be just seeing the difference in people’s lives.

(Telephone) *Oh good morning, my name is Ellie; I am calling from Social Services ...*

It’s no longer about what we can do for them, it is about how we fit into their world; which is a bit of a change if you are used to the old system.

Wendy Curry: The old style of working, where you are going out and meeting that person once, and really fixing the situation, is now I am getting a relationship with that person, which I think is what social work is all about.

Narrator: Here at the personal budgets team in Hull they are now putting personalisation into practice day to day. But we are finding out how the team overcame the challenges of such a significant culture change, and transformed the working practices of their frontline staff.

Alison Barker: For some staff they have seen it very much as a kind of top down, government/management led, and actually personalisation very much has to be grown and it has to be nurtured in frontline delivery.

Narrator: Wendy Curry has worked in Hull Care Management for fourteen years, but with the introduction of personalisation the day to day working lives of front line staff like Wendy went through a major transformation.

Wendy Curry: Personalisation, when it first came in it was a big shift for social workers, used to working with the community care assessments, really quick assessments, big like quick fix, and sometimes it was like fitting a round peg into a square hole and it’s difficult.

Helen Sanderson: Many social workers say this is getting back to the heart of why they came into social work in the first place. So for many this is a really good opportunity to do what they have always wanted to do, and for it to be less about filling in paperwork, less about

inputting data on computers. For other people it is a bigger challenge, a shift from being the person who has a certain degree of control over the process, to really sharing power and empowering the person to be completely at the centre.

Ellie Namih: I think in my role as a social worker some of my fears around personalisation first centred on how could we fit in with people's lives. If it is self directed, where do we come in as a social worker?

Alison Barker: People have got into certain ways of practice, so people are comfortable, and it's been a real challenge for people to actually dismantle their values and the way they have been practising and to actually start to refocus on those core social work values. And not just people, again ticking boxes, making it a bureaucratic process, actually making it real for people, and that has to come from practitioners.

Narrator: Wendy is on her way to catch up with the Evans family who she has been working with for some time.

Wendy Curry: I have been working with them for about two years now, and it's taken a long time to persuade them to have some support.

Narrator: Carl Evans is part of a close knit family who have a set of multiple needs. While Wendy has been working with various members of the family, her particular focus with Carl, who has severe learning disabilities, was to help him address his lack of social stimulation.

Wendy Curry: Carl lived with his brother Christopher who also has a learning disability, and his mum June. And I met his carer, which was his sister April.

April: It was pretty hard really, because I am a carer to him twenty-four hours a day, well I virtually do everything. And they had never seen a social worker up until eighteen months ago, we never had them involved. Carl is fifty-seven, but if it hadn't have been for Wendy getting involved, and me not being so stubborn ...

Wendy Curry: She was worried about Carl; Carl was really quite withdrawn, just wanted to be with his mum all the time. He didn't want to go out if mum wouldn't go out, and by this time his mum June was starting to get really tired, and no motivation to go out or do anything. And so as a consequence of that Carl's life was not very fulfilling I would say.

So you like going out then Carl?

Narrator: With personalisation Wendy's focus was to get to know Carl in depth, and through the process of support planning he revealed he had an interest in gardening.

Wendy Curry: It enabled me to work in a different way with Carl, and with April. And it was really to sit back and let them talk more about

their lives, and what was more important to them, rather than going in and solving the problem for them.

- April: It has worked out well because they do get out and about. They have actually got a life now.
- Narrator: With his personal budget Carl chose to employ personal assistant Tracy Asquith who was able to help him pursue his interest.
- Tracy Asquith: *Are these cherry tomatoes?*
- Carl: *Yeah.*
- Tracy Asquith: *What are these flowers over here?*
- Narrator: This gave Carl some independence, and his mother and sister a vital break.
- Wendy Curry: So I managed to get him a personal budget to have some social stimulation, time out away from mum, to develop some independence for the future really.
- Carl: *[unclear-06.04] isn't it?*
- Tracy Asquith: *Is that ready for picking?*
- Carl: *Yeah.*
- Wendy Curry: And he goes to Myers Beck, which is a gardening project which he really loves. It is just so rewarding; I couldn't have done that under the old system. You are looking at meeting the basic needs, making sure somebody is washed and dressed and they have got proper nutrition, and maybe social stimulation you would put in to a degree, but those little finer things that you and would take for granted, to be able to just go out independently, it is just so easy for us, but for Carl he wasn't able to do that. For me, as a worker, it was just so touching, and it was just a really lovely piece of work.
- Helen Sanderson: It's not enough just to say be person centred, keep the person at the centre; most of us need some ways to do that. So in Hull the first thing that they did was give everybody that fundamental training around person centred thinking tools that they can use in their role.
- The group developed best practice statements, and I think some of these really are great examples of some of the changes that we are talking about in personalisation. So, the very person one is that we help you to create a support plan that is individual to you.
- Ellie Namih: Listen to your client, take stock – take time to listen to your client. What do they need, what do they want?

Tracy Meyerhoff: We also perhaps look at families and friends, or people involved in their lives. From their perspective what is working and not working.

Alison Barker: This approach is very much about building on people's own capacities to reach their own solutions, and to problem solve themselves.

Ellie Namih: Think about your person centred thinking when you did your qualifications all that time ago, think back to them because it's a really positive move in that direction.

Helen Sanderson: Seeing people as individuals and treating them with respect, and not making assumptions about who they are, or what they might want to do, based on labels or lifestyles, or anything.

Wendy Curry: *How did it make you feel?*

Carl: *Alright.*

Wendy Curry: *Alright?*

I think the training helped you to take a step back and allow that person time to express their needs. It is a long process and you are taking it step by step.

Helen Sanderson: What could the future be like? Well I think social workers who are passionate about delivering person centred services for people, and really listening to people, and problem solving with people, will be really enjoying their jobs, and getting a lot of satisfaction out of seeing the changes that they are making alongside everybody else.

[End of Recording]