This is a rough sketch[1] that arrays different approaches to person-centered planning in terms of their demand for investment in response to different levels of uncertainty. As uncertainty rises, so do the reasons to pay an increased transaction cost to build the clarity of purpose and level of alignment necessary to achieve a worthy purpose.

Resources include available assistance, access to desired settings and roles, social linkages, knowledge, skills, resiliency and self-efficacy.

When the people who choose a person's life arrangements know what they want and how they want to organize the person's conditions and they judge that necessary resources are available, a straightforward support plan of the sort offered on Shop4Support is the most direct, least costly way to plan. It makes sense not to require more

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[1] The placements on the diagram are notional and would be more accurate if they were represented as bubbles that overlap in the territory they cover.

Uncertainty grows in at least two dimensions. First, the less able we are to imagine a person in a satisfying set of valued roles and relationships, the greater the relevant uncertainty. This sort of uncertainty can sometimes require a substantial investment, such as is required by MAPS or PERSONAL FUTURES PLANNING to support people in clarifying and acting on their gifts and capacities. Second, What is wanted is clear enough to go on with, but how to organize action is unclear enough to require social invention or calls for a high enough level of interdependence to make it necessary to gather and support people in the way that PATH does.

An interesting situation arises when social policy calls for transformation of both supply and demand for publicly funded personal assistance or opportunities. In this circumstance, there is a possibility that is not alive for the people planning and implementing the policy will call for finding respectful ways to introduce relevant uncertainty. For example, a policy goal of significantly increasing the number of people with disabilities who are competitively employed will only be successful to the extent that growing numbers of people decide that they want to work and employers develop the necessary competency and service providers reshape their offerings to support this necessary relationship. The policy goal will be frustrated by a planning process is boxed in by a mindset that rules out employment as a possibility. In that case, people who can't imagine the person at work will strike what seems to them a good bargain with providers who offer much less than real work. Many more elders than necessary will seek some form of residential care if they and their families can't imagine alternatives and locate providers of assistance who are willing to learn with them. Under these circumstances "What is important to me" might not provide near enough tension to pop service providers out of being satisfied with confirming people in marginal roles by improving their conditions of social exclusion.

This becomes even more interesting when offering the necessary supports requires an ongoing learning process, either because support providers have not worked out the means to straightforwardly offer policy consistent assistance or because the complexity of people's circumstances call for a high level of mutual learning –as in the DISCOVERY process for assisting people with very substantial disabilities into

employment, or in the process of supported living for people with progressive dementia.

From this point of view, the strength of Putting People First (like Valuing People Now) considerably complicates the person-centered planning process. The person is a citizen of a state that seeks a new settlement with those who receive social care. With that citizenship comes a responsibility that people and their allies need to work to understand. In a sense, one of our challenges is to bring the voice of a positive and challenging policy into the planning process. This challenges some practitioners' notion that the person-centered planning process is ideally uni-vocal.

Partners in Policymaking and its growing list of cousins can reduce the load on the planning process by helping people imagine new possibilities and ways around the current incompetence of service providers when that is at issue. So can the sorts of examples disseminated through various in Control media.