Person Centred Planning In It's Strategic Context

Towards a Framework for Reflection-In-Action

John O'Brien and David Towell

In response to *Valuing People*, the number of people with learning disabilities experiencing person-centred planning is growing, and the number of people learning about person-centered planning is growing even faster. David Towell invited 28 people to spend two days at Cranfield University on 10-11 March 2003 thinking together about the kinds of changes in specialist and mainstream services that would significantly increase …

…the benefits that people realize from their involvement in person-centred planning and

…the numbers of people who benefit from person-centered planning.

Some of us are people who are the focus of person-centred planning, some of as have children or relatives with disabilities, others facilitate and teach person-centred planning, others manage service provision, others manage service commissioning, others are involved in the activities of Partnership Boards, others have

national responsibility for assisting the implementation of *Valuing People*. Many of us have more than one of these roles.

We worked together in small groups and shared some of our learning with the whole group. As a whole group, we also listened to brief and powerful presentations by four people who are making important changes in their lives. Our discussions fell under four headings:

- Based on our experience, what "big picture" issues are emerging around the early implementation of person-centred planning?
- What has to happen locally to create the conditions under which person-centred planning can help large numbers of people to have better lives?
- What are the lessons from our discussions for national policy and implementation?
- Where and how can each of us contribute?

John O'Brien wrote these notes to summarize the large group discussions. He worked from the graphic record prepared and checked with participants during the whole group discussions. Because much of the work happened in small groups, every participant will have talked about many things not reflected here.

These notes are **not easy to read**. We are still exploring ideas that are complicated for us to understand. We want to work with people with learning disabilities to find more accessible ways to talk about these things. We hope that people who find this hard to read will work with others on their team to figure out what we've said and tell us what they think.

Our Question

What will it take for person-centred planning to lead to better lives for big numbers of people?

What do we mean by "Strategic Context"

The word **context** points our attention away from the details of how person-centred plans get made to the environment in which person-centred plans get implemented. The word **strategic** points our attention to capacities that must be developed on purpose, over time, if person-centered plans are going to lead to real positive differences in lots of people's lives.

So thinking about person-centered planning in its strategic context means identifying what needs to change in specialist services and what needs to change

in mainstream services (like housing, transportation, education, benefits, and services that help people get into jobs) if big numbers of people are going to be able to turn good plans into better lives. These changes will only happen if people work together across the boundaries that separate services. It will be some time before new ways of working become widely enough established to make it easy to gather the resources to implement a person-centred plan without a good deal of creative problem solving and negotiation.

Some people who make person-centred plans show the kinds of changes in specialist and mainstream services that are needed to make people's lives better: they either find ways to make existing services work to support the life they want for themselves or clearly identify the barriers that have to come down and the new capacities that must be created.

As people who have authority to change specialist and mainstream services figure out –through Partnership Boards– how to shape their services to match what *Valuing People* says, it will get easier to implement person-centred plans. Then more people will want to make plans that make the principles in *Valuing People* real for them. To make these principles real, Partnership Boards need to think about the services available now from two points of view. Partnership boards will do good work if they look at and change local realities…

…from the point of view of the principles and priorities identified by *Valuing People*.

…from the point of view of the growing number of people who use person-centred plans to identify the ways they chose to live and the way they want to use their fair share of available resources to help them to live that way.

What results do we want?

To focus our thinking, we identified three results we want to achieve and assigned each a symbol and a color. We use the word **capacity** to stand for all that it takes to do something well, including people's knowledge and skills, authorization, time, and investments of money.

First, we want to develop local capacity to give people with learning disabilities and the people who know them best the assistance they need to say how they want to live their lives and to specify the sort of opportunities and assistance that will make a positive difference to them. This is the function

I can say what matters to me & how I want to live

Growing numbers have person-centred plans

of person-centred planning, So far, most Partnership Boards have put most of their attention on increasing the numbers of people who know about person-centred planning and developing facilitators for person-centered plans.

Second, we want to develop local capacity to adapt specialist services so that they can deliver needed assistance in ways that respond effectively to the requirements that arise from person-centred plans. We see this as a systematic process

I get the assistance I need to live as I want

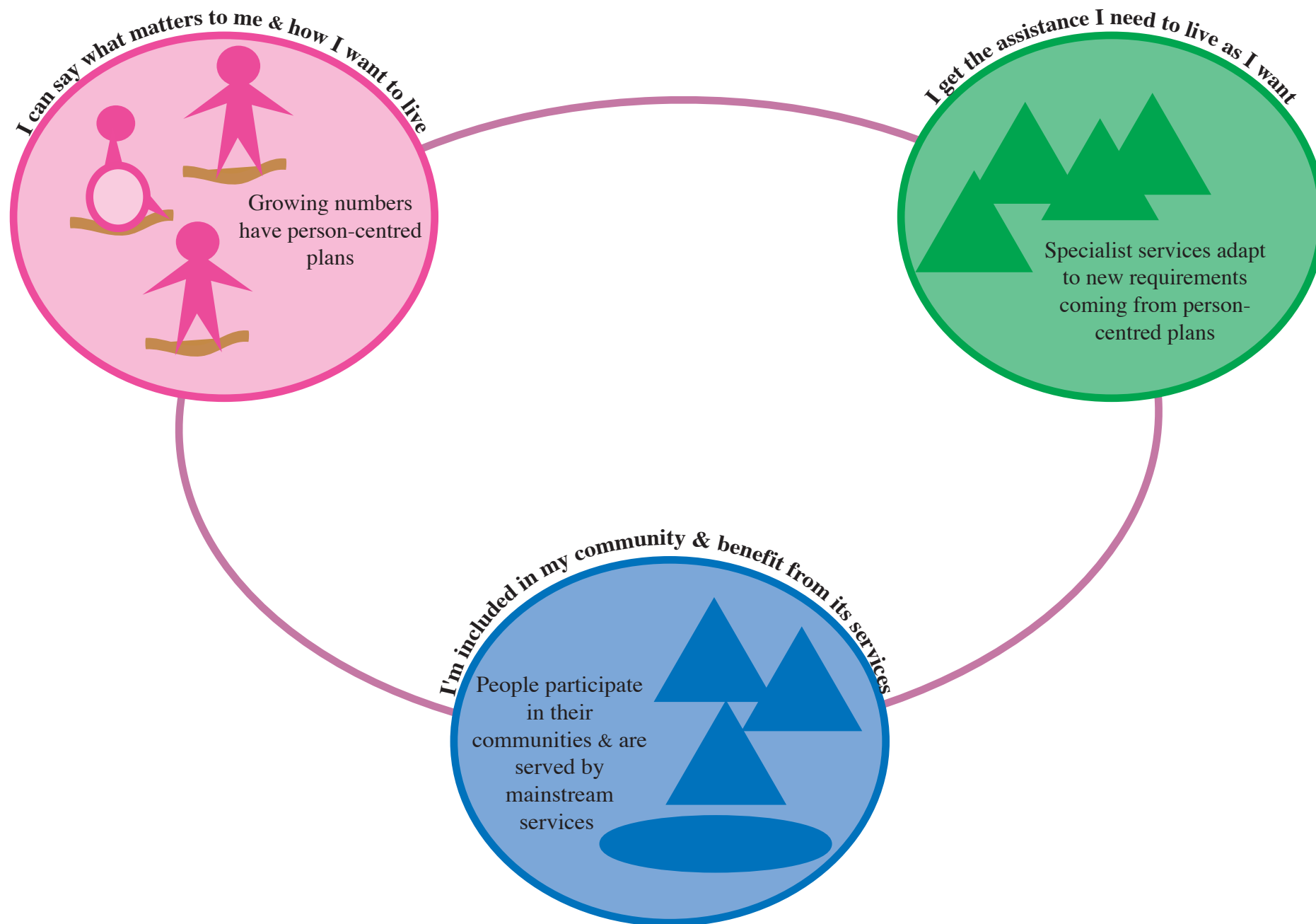Specialist services adapt to new requirements coming from person-centred plans

of changing both the kinds of services offered and the culture of services. This process involves creating an account of required adaptations to specialist services from the experience of the initial group of people who engage in person-centred planning and combining this with an assessment of existing local services in light of *Valuing People* to plan and learn to make necessary changes.

Third, we want people with learning disabilities to participate in and contribute to their communities. This kind of active participation allows people to share in the responsibilities and opportunities that come from being a friend, a good neighbor, a supporter of

I'm included in my community & benefit from its services

People participate in their communities & are served by mainstream services

local activities, a member of groups, a worker, and sometimes an activist for change (as when adults with disabilities reach out to educate school children about disability or work with the police to increase the security of our streets). We also want to develop local capacity in mainstream services so that people with learning disabilities benefit from the services to which their citizenship entitles them. *Valuing People* identifies mainstream services and benefits as a major source of the resources necessary to assure that people can participate in and contribute to the life of their communities.

The relationship among the capacities to produce these three results creates the strategic context for person

The Strategic Context for Person-Centred Planning I

I can say what matters to me & how I want to live

Growing numbers have person-centred plans

I get the assistance I need to live as I want

Specialist services adapt to new requirements coming from person-centred plans

I'm included in my community & benefit from its services

People participate in their communities & are served by mainstream services

centered planning, as suggested by the diagram on the previous page. Each capacity constrains the other two:

- Weaknesses in regularly summing up what people are calling for in their person-centred plans and changing services to meet the variety of requirements for individualized supports reduce the ability to implement person-centred plans and discourages people from investing in plans that say clearly what matters to them and the kinds of assistance that work best for them. Specialist services that fail to change to assist individuals to access and successfully use mainstream services will limit mainstream services opportunities to include people with disabilities. They will also suffer from greater scarcity of resources than *Valuing People* intends by its call on mainstream services to include people with learning disabilities in the same benefits they offer to any other person.

- Weaknesses in mainstream services capacity to include people with learning disabilities and offer them the same benefits as other citizens leave specialized services with the burden of paying for and providing services that others people receive from mainstream sources while it increases the number of problems that people must deal with as they work to implement their person-centred plans.

- Weaknesses in person-centred planning decrease the numbers of people with learning disabilities with the information and support they need to take up mainstream services while depriving efforts to change the culture of specialist services of information about necessary changes and concrete opportunities to learn new ways in partnership with individual people and their allies.

Investing too much in making person-centred plans and too little in culture change in specialist services and opening access to mainstream resources will frustrate the implementation of *Valuing People*. An effective strategy will balance investments so that each growing capacity strengthens the others. Because both specialist and mainstream services have to figure out how to deal with many competing priorities under different local conditions, it will be hard to move smoothly to get this balance right. A lot depends on how effectively Partnership Boards work together and how much power partnership boards can claim in local areas by building good relationships among people with knowledge and people with influence. There won't be a perfect strategy, a "good enough" strategy will do.
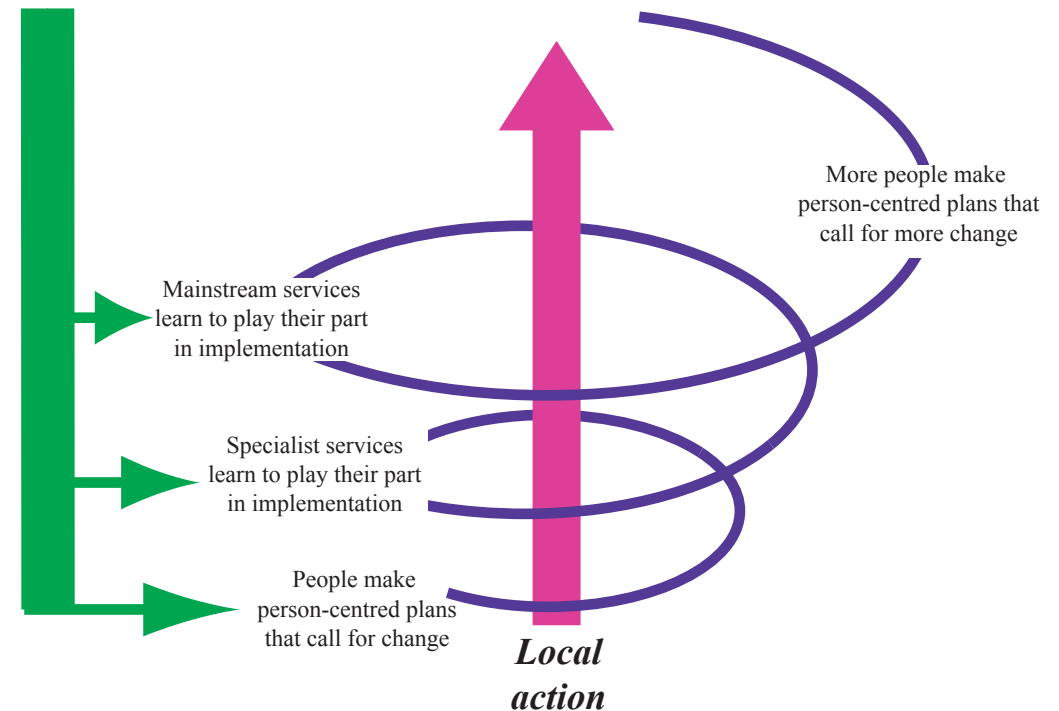
How will a good enough strategy contribute to positive changes for people and services?

An effective strategy will allow growing numbers of people to implement plans that reflect considered choices about how they want to live and what assistance will work best for them. As specialized services learn to accommodate a greater variety of requirements for individual support based on the plans created by early adopters of person-centred planning, it will become easier for the next wave of people to implement

their plans. As more plans incorporate mainstream resources, it will become more beneficial to plan and more people will choose to do so. As more people make plans that refine the adaptions of specialist services and access mainstream services, more people will have better lives.

This strategy generates a positive spiral. From the top down, *Valuing People* makes plain the kinds of changes the Government wants local specialist and mainstream services to make, and it identifies person-centred planning as one of the ways to direct these changes. From the bottom up, mainstream services will learn how to include people with learning disabilities

Valuing People

Mainstream services learn to play their part in implementation

Specialist services learn to play their part in implementation

People make person-centred plans that call for change

More people make person-centred plans that call for more change

Local action

and specialist services will learn how to assist people to have the lives they want by responding to what they request based on their person-centred plans. More people will have a good chance to have better lives.

Why a "good enough" strategy?

Making *Valuing People* real would be easier if…

… the Government had attached a substantial amount of new money.

… policies for modernizing mainstream services explicitly assigned very high priority to including people with learning disabilities.

… policy changes in other areas of specialist service provision harmonized with the values and principles of *Valuing People*

… managers and local political decision makers had only a manageably few priorities for change and plenty of time and money to support the change process.

However, local governments and mainstream services are dealing with many priorities for modernization and many perceive an overall scarcity of resources; Partnership Boards themselves feel rushed to respond to many requirements; some important initiatives for modernizing mainstream services don't explicitly refer to the inclusion of people with learning disabilities; there are potential disharmonies among policies (e.g. possible negative effects of implementing the Care

"We are not sure that Government as a whole is giving enough priority to people with learning disabilities. We have not yet seen much to prove that all parts of Government have accepted Valuing People and that this means they need to change how they work so that people with learning disabilities are included when they make new plans and change things. Unless they also change, the lives of people with learning disabilities will not get better."

– Making Things Happen: First Annual Report of the Learning Disability Task Force

Standards Act on supported living); and many people think that the funding available for specialized learning disability services is insufficient to keep up with growing demand.

It would also be easier to implement *Valuing People* if necessary changes in specialist services were simply a matter of adopting new procedures and techniques. However, the change needs to go deeper, to shift a culture shaped by beliefs that services exist to gather people with learning disabilities together and control them for their own good. This culture makes too little room for recognizing that people with learning disabilities have the same rights and responsibilities as any other citizen and encourages services that are inconsistent with the nation's social inclusion agenda. It has created and then covered-up many problems. For example,

- Many people were re-settled from large institutions into group living arrangements that are smaller and often physically much better than the institution but still leave people outside their community and under staff control. Agreements between health or social service authorities and housing associations can lock people into these "part-way to-a-full-life" services, unless commissioners and providers can find ways to bridge into more individualized forms of services.

- The "professionals know best" assumption still shapes many relationships between people with learning disabilities, their families, and services. People with disabilities and family members are uncertain that they will be heard; professionals are uncertain that they can respond to what people and families have to say. This difficulty in finding effective ways to communicate can even effect Partnership Boards, whose members have to learn how to listen to each other and work together to make and implement plans to change the culture and systems that contain them.

These conditions make it hard to imagine getting agreement on and smoothly implementing a coordinated strategy that deals with all the potential difficulties before people take action. A good enough strategy will allow people to clarify their purpose, find as many openings for positive action as possible, and support people to reflect on and revise as things change.

The personal context for planning

Our work focused on the strategic context for person-centred planning so that we could think about how to improve the chances for big numbers of people to have better lives. However, we also reminded each other that people with learning disabilities and their allies have used person-centred planning to make positive changes before service cultures and practices have decided to change.

One way we heard that this has happened is through the involvement of ordinary people in active Circles of Support. Sometimes this has resulted in people finding home-grown solutions like the following. Local specialist and mainstream services may be a long way from assisting people with learning disabilities into a proper job, but local people may know who is hiring and support a person's application. Transportation policy may make it hard for people with disabilities

to get where they need to go, but local people may be able to figure out how to arrange a ride. This kind of action begins with the planning question, "How would anyone else around here accomplish this?"

Because *Valuing People* expects that people with learning disabilities will draw on ordinary, informal resources ("natural supports") as they live the lives they choose, it's important to remember this ordinary context for person-centred planning. One aspect of the culture change needed in specialist services is to make room for ordinary solutions and informal supports rather than reaching reflexively for a formal service solution, whether specialist or mainstream.

Two dimensions of change

The local conditions for implementing person-centered plans develop as two kinds of changes happen:

Crossing boundaries
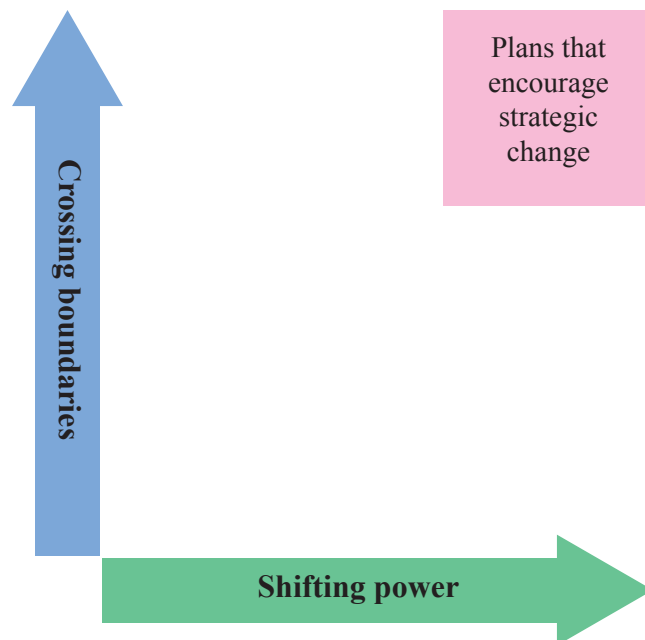
Plans that encourage strategic change

Shifting power

- It becomes easier for people with learning disabilities to cross the boundaries of mainstream services so that they receive the same benefits as any other person does and it becomes more common for people with learning disabilities to participate in ordinary community life.
- The culture of specialist services changes so that power shifts from services and their staff having control over people with learning disabilities to people with learning disabilities and their families taking responsibility for choosing how they want to live with the resources and opportunities available to them and how specialist services will offer them the greatest assistance.

Those people who have the support and the courage to make and act on plans that push cultural change and move them into the use of mainstream services will be encouraging strategic changes, changes that can benefit more people than themselves by creating new patterns of services, opening new doors for people with learning disabilities, and showing new possibilities. Because this sort of plan stretches both specialist and mainstream services, it will take time, creativity, courage, persistence, and plenty of help from other people interested in real change. And even then, there is a real risk that desired changes will not happen as people wish. The people who make this kind of plans are pioneers.

Of course, progress on the rest of the Partnership Board's agenda determines how far it is possible for pioneers to travel and how many people will be able to follow the paths that they open up. One common way that systems resist change is to create exceptions to accommodate a few individuals, then say "We've done that." and leave everyone else pretty much where they are.

Identifying these pioneering plans as making a strategic difference is not to put down person-centred plans that lead to real improvements in people's lives without connecting a person to mainstream services or working for a different, more individualized form of service. It is just to underline the importance of encouraging those who make and support person-centred plans to reach as far as they can in the direction that *Valuing People* points. Often people who have not experienced being heard by service workers will start small and then they will move on to a bigger change when small steps succeed,

Making change in these two dimensions calls for five kinds of action:

- Encourage responsibility for positive action.
- Check for evidence of results in peoples lives, in cultural shifts in specialist services, and in greater inclusion in mainstream services.
- Generate knowledge of mainstream service sectors.
- Generate local knowledge of the communities people live in.
- Discover and broadcast what is being learned about how to get better results from specialist and mainstream services.

These actions will move forward as new connections and relationships grow.

The shapes of change

People organize themselves in different ways for different purposes. Shifting the context to allow more people to make person-centred plans that result in better lives involves developing relationships and connections that take each of these different shapes.

Two shapes reflect formal organizations.

- Formal organizations divide and control work through a hierarchy of tasks and reports. In the public sector they offer defined services and implement policies. Social Services Departments are formal organizations; so are Government Departments and service providing organizations.
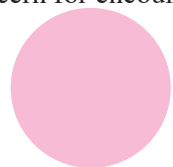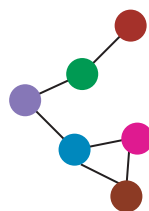
- When formal organizations plan, they often create official advisory groups in order to consult representatives of those with a stake in their services. The Learning Disability Task Force is such a group. When they collaborate with one another, they often create formal cross-organizational groups to make plans in response to requirements. A Partnership Board is such a group. These formal groups serve the agenda of the authorities that commission them.
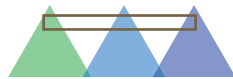
Three shapes reflect some of the many ways that people choose to create connections and relationships that support things that matter to them.

- People maintain and extend their networks in order to gather and pass on information, reach new people through introductions from those they already know, exchange help, and define possible deals.

- Circles gather those who share a concern for encouragement, emotional support, practical help, and personal exchanges. A circle may form around one person. They are people who believe in the person, deserve the person's trust, and provide help. A circle may form as a group of like minded people who gather to support and encourage one another.

- Communities of practice are created when people who share a passion (for example, a passion for person-centred planning or advocacy for human rights), and who come from different locations, come together occasionally to exchange information, expertise, and knowledge.

Networks, circles, and communities of practice are important settings for making cultural change in specialist services and making the boundaries into mainstream services and community life easier to cross. Each, in its own way, connects people and creates conversations and exchanges that serve as sources of knowledge and energy to take action.

Formal organizations can't command or control these important ways that people organize themselves. They can support their emergence by investing their employee's time and by offering some practical support. The Valuing People Support Team is assisting the development of communities of practice around person-centred planning and a number of authorities and organizations are allowing their staff time to participate.

No reasonable attempt at significant change will depend solely on formal structures. Those who want change will need to invest in building their networks across boundaries, in gathering strength through circles, and in expanding skills and knowledge through communities of practice.

Responsibility for action

The more people simply identify problems and wants and wait for formal systems to solve the problems and deliver their wants, the more bogged down in resentment and confusion the process of cultural change will get. It's easy for staff who feel overwhelmed and people with learning disabilities and family who feel like services never listen to find others to blame. The problem with this desire to blame isn't with accuracy: most staff are overloaded and few people with disabilities and family members feel respectfully heard. The problem is with what it will take to make progress on the deep changes that *Valuing People* calls for: more people –staff, managers, politicians, family members, people with disabilities, ordinary members of the public–who see themselves as responsible for finding ways to move things along.

A specialist service culture shaped by the belief that "professionals have all the answers" can trap anyone. Staff can be trapped into controlling the people they assist. People with learning disabilities and family members can be trapped into thinking that positive changes will happen if only they can persuade, petition, or push the system to deliver what they want (a position that assumes that they **do** have the answers and simply won't deliver) .

The signs of being caught in this trap sometimes show up in people's imaginings about person-centred planning. Some staff and managers worry that if people say what they want in their life, it will be staff's responsibility to deliver all that people want. Some people with learning disabilities and family members are reluctant to get involved in person-centred planning until they have proof that "they" (staff and managers) will actu-

ally deliver on what people call for in their plans. Both of these reasons to be reluctant about person-centred planning are expressions of the specialist service culture that *Valuing People* wants to change. They leave people with learning disabilities and family members passively waiting for staff to deliver rather than reorganizing things to make room for partnerships in which everyone takes responsibility for action.

Specialist services do have a duty to provide services that meet people's assessed needs. Mainstream services do have a duty to provide for eligible people, including people with learning disabilities. There is no excuse for treating people disrespectfully. And, the culture of specialist services has to change. This calls for new learning that has to be done in partnership. And, mainstream services have to find ways to open their doors to people they have been accustomed to seeing as the responsibility of specialist services This calls for new learning which has to be done in partnership.

This learning will take place as more staff, more managers, more people with learning disabilities, more family members break out of existing patterns and find new ways to relate to one another. There are at least two starting places for responsible action.

The first way begins with the confidence that comes from recognizing that people with learning disabilities have much to offer and that it is often exciting and rewarding to play a part in making the changes called for by *Valuing People*. This way involves…

- Saying clearly what we want more of, focusing on creating more of what we find positive.
- Asking, "Who do we want to join us and how do we ask them?"

- Finding ways to communicate the benefits and the excitement of creating more individually responsive supports and more inclusive mainstream service and communities.

Sometimes the message to mainstream services and community members is a straightforward one. To get what we want, all that is necessary is that others see the person with a learning disabilities as a person like anyone else and do the same for them as they would for anyone else. Sometimes people with learning disabilities may need mainstream services to make some adjustments. Whatever the message needs to be it is important to frame it as much as possible in terms that make sense to the people we are inviting to join us.

The second way to positive change responds to blocks and barriers.

- Ask, "What exactly is getting in the way of good work?"
- Clearly identify the changes that would increase effectiveness and make whatever change is within our ability.
- Negotiate with others who need to make changes.
- Identify and pursue alternatives if our negotiations for change are unsuccessful.

Whichever way we choose, there are four guides to follow:

- Take time to build personal connections.
- Minimize blaming.
- Invite people to get involved in a helpful way.
- As much as possible, work with those who are willing; some reluctant people will become more willing when they can see what happens for others.

Look for evidence of results

Person-centred planning is a process, better lives are results. The deliberations and documents of Partnership Boards are processes, increases in social inclusion are results.

Both person-centered planning and Partnership Boards are positive and hopeful processes and there are many things to learn in order for them both to properly involve people and plan together effectively. But it's important not to let our concerns for getting the process right take our attention away from results that improve people's lives and contribute materially to important national agendas.

Much that matters to people can't be measured in numbers, but there are numbers to indicate the rate at which a locality is progressing.

Because not everyone will want the same thing, it makes sense to look at results in terms of proportions of the whole population of people with learning disabilities. Not everyone will want a job in the open labor market, but some people do, and *Valuing People* calls for a significant increase in the numbers of people at work. So, tracking the percentage of people at work from year to year would be good information for people who facilitate person-centred plans to think about. They can ask themselves how the plans they are facilitating help people move into work.

Some indicators of progress on crossing boundaries into mainstream services might be:

- The percentage of people with learning disabilities who live in their own homes with needed assistance, the amounts of publicly available money people use to pay for housing, the amount of equity people are building in their property.

- The percentage of people with learning disabilities at work in the open labor market, the amount of money they earn, the amount of taxes they pay, the value of the benefits they continue to receive.
- The percentage of people earning qualifications.
- The percentage of people receiving adequate primary health care.

Some indicators that power is shifting in the direction of people with learning disabilities might be:

- The percentage of available funds for specialist supports expended through direct payments.
- The percentage of available funds expended on commissioning supports to individuals and families.
- The percentage of available funds redirected from congregate housing and congregate day services to supports for individuals.
- The number of people with learning disabilities who facilitate person-centred planning for other people.
- The number of family members who facilitate person-centred planning.
- Etc.

As often as possible, the results of changes for people with learning disabilities should be clearly linked to other important agendas:

- Social inclusion.
- Welfare to work.
- Connexions.
- National Service Frameworks for health.
- Etc.

Generate knowledge

Two kinds of knowledge are necessary if people with learning disabilities are to take their place in community life and in mainstream services. Call one kind "local knowledge" and the other "sector knowledge" (as in the "housing sector" or the "health care sector).

Both kinds of knowledge are generated in the same ways: by extending personal networks to include people from the other side of the boundary; by inviting people to cross the boundary and join our circles; by joining communities of practice with mainstream agendas (e.g. people interested in local economic development or improving further education opportunities); and by finding ways to take some action together that benefits each interest.

These two questions indicate the attitude that has the best chance of generating useful knowledge:

- What does the world look like through the other person's eyes?
- How could we help the other person pursue something that is important to them that would also have benefits to us?

Local knowledge is specific to particular neighborhoods, villages, workplaces, etc. As local knowledge grows, people have better answers to questions like these:

- Who around here knows… (… who is hiring, who might be a good assistant for a person with learning disabilities, how to join the community theatre, how to raise tropical fish, a good plumber)?
- Who around here is interested and active in… (…line dancing, trains, local history, woodworking, supporting name your favorite football club)?
- Who around here do others look to for help?
- Who around here do people respect for their opinions?
- Who around here is active in politics?
- Who are the champions for this community and what is their agenda?

Sector knowledge concerns different mainstream services (housing, economic development, education, benefits administration, employment programs, primary health care, etc.). Some of this knowledge is local, but much of it applies across the whole country. As sector knowledge grows, people have better answers to questions like these:

- What is the history and identity of this mainstream service?
- What jurisdiction does this mainstream service have?
- What are its geographic boundaries and subdivisions?
- How does money flow to and through this mainstream service?
- What language do people in this sector speak: vocabulary, jargon?
- What kinds of reasons and arguments persuade people in this sector?
- What is the current agenda?
- What do people inside this service see as problems, pressures, and the leading edge of innovation?
- What does the organization chart look like?
- How do the procedures work?
- Who gets things done?
- Who influences the people in charge?

Generating knowledge is like learning to speak a new language. It takes time. It takes the ability to not know the correct answers and to ask questions. And the best way to learn is in conversation with native speakers; only some of what's necessary to know can come from books.

The best learning, and the most change, comes when people with learning disabilities cross the boundaries into a new sector and get involved in combining their agenda with that of the people inside. We heard of a group of self-advocates who have gotten involved in London Transport's efforts to improve public transportation. They joined in because the rules for using their bus passes didn't allow travel before 9:00 am and this made people late to their jobs. This issue has been resolved, and along the way the group has received funding to develop training for London Transport. Members of this group are coming to know the public transit sector from the inside out.

There are many reasons to take actions that will benefit people with learning disabilities. By reaching out to link our agenda with those of mainstream services, and by making the effort to learn their language, it is sometimes possible to make positive changes without requiring mainstream services to adopt our whole agenda.

Sharing what is learned

Generating knowledge is a lot of work. That's why it makes sense to invest in ways for people to say what they have learned and share it with others. Some of this can be done in writing and in videos and on the internet. But some of it takes the kind of occasional face-to-face contact among interested people that communities of practice offer.

As people who are passionate about person-centred planning start to exchange mainstream service sector knowledge at their gatherings, that will be a sign that person-centred planning is influencing its strategic environment.

Afterthoughts: Another view of the strategic context

The conference stimulated many of us to keep thinking after we left. The picture on the next page points toward another way to define the strategic context for person centered planning, based on David Towell's post-conference reflections.
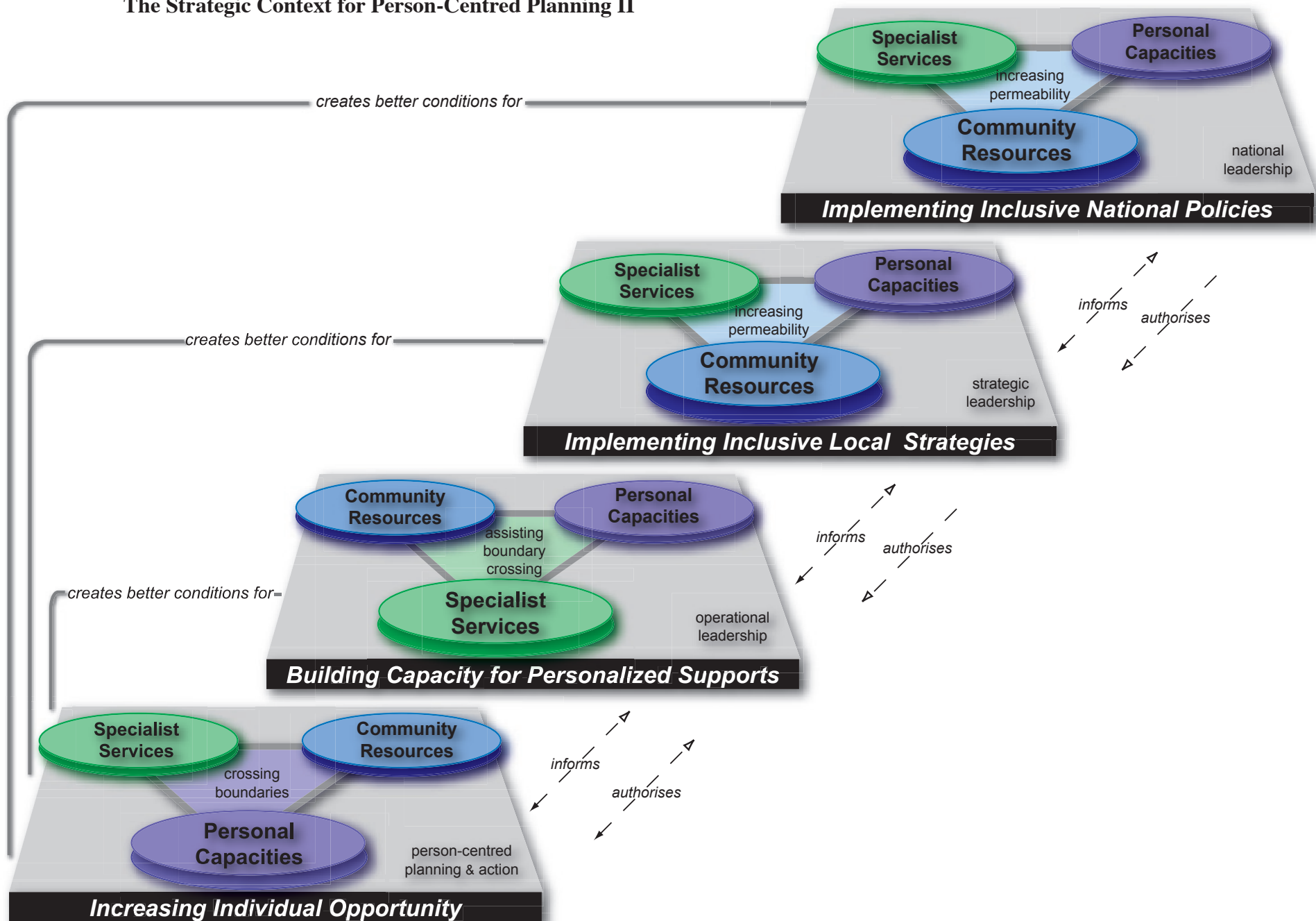
This diagram indicates that the conditions for successful person-centred planning and action are set by performance at **four different levels of action**.

- At the personal level, the focus is on **increasing individual opportunity** through person-centred planning and action. In order to shift power toward people with learning disabilities, specialist services must recognize that the need to have control of one's life and services is as legitimate as people's need for practical help; and mainstream services must recognize people with learning disabilities as bearing the same rights as any other citizen. In order to promote social inclusion, all those working at the personal level must cross boundaries that typically lead to the exclusion of people with learning disabilities from community life and mainstream resources.

- At the service level, the focus is on **building capacity for personalized supports** that include growing numbers of people with learning disabilities through the exercise of operational leadership. This means that specialist services aggregate information about changing individual demands, consider the requirements of *Valuing People* and learn to offer an increasing variety of different combinations and types of assistance in ways that increase people's ability to exercise effective control of their lives. It also means that specialist and mainstream services negotiate their respective roles in ways that make it possible to assist more and more people with learning disabilities to cross the boundaries between specialist and mainstream services. It also means that people with learning disabilities and family members play an active role in operational leadership, considering not just their personal circumstances but the capacity of specialist and mainstream services to effectively support and include bigger and bigger numbers of people whose interests and needs may differ from their own.

- At the local authority level, the focus is on **implementing inclusive local strategies** by exercising strategic leadership so that all local public investments develop capacity for social inclusion and increase the personal capacities of all local citizens. Some of these strategies involve shifting the culture and practices of local specialist and mainstream services so that boundaries are more permeable, allowing excluded people to move more easily into mainstream services. Others strategies involve building local social capital. People with learning disabilities and family members play an active role in the administrative and political decision making for their whole locality.

- At the national level, the focus is on **implementing inclusive national policies**, exercising national

The Strategic Context for Person-Centred Planning II

Specialist Services — Personal Capacities

increasing permeability

Community Resources

national leadership

Implementing Inclusive National Policies

creates better conditions for

informs   authorises

Specialist Services — Personal Capacities

increasing permeability

Community Resources

strategic leadership

Implementing Inclusive Local Strategies

creates better conditions for

informs   authorises

Community Resources — Personal Capacities

assisting boundary crossing

Specialist Services

operational leadership

Building Capacity for Personalized Supports

creates better conditions for

informs   authorises

Specialist Services — Community Resources

crossing boundaries

Personal Capacities

person-centred planning & action

Increasing Individual Opportunity

tional leadership so that more and more of the government's investments join-up to promote social inclusion and build personal capacities. In addition to building social capital, national policies will improve the conditions under which local authorities implement inclusive local strategies. People with learning disabilities and family members have an important role to play in the planning and advisory bodies that influence national leadership.

Each level offers three points of view on action:

- Positively affecting the **personal capacities** of people with learning disabilities including people's experiences and knowledge and skills, people's needs for specialist assistance, people's use of mainstream services, and people's connections to other people and groups in their communities.

- Positively affecting the fit between **specialist services** and the individual requirements of people with learning disabilities for assistance and control; and positively affecting the division of responsibility between specialist services and community resources.

- Positively affecting the fit between **community resources** and the eligibilities and interests of people with learning disabilities; and positively affecting the capacity of specialist services to achieve a clear and coherent focus on the individual needs of people with learning disabilities by allowing them to attend to the things they are uniquely qualified to do without duplicating the work of mainstream resources.

The better each level performs, the stronger will be performance at other levels, provided that there are effective ways to communicate among levels. Higher levels do create conditions for performance at lower levels, and performance will be strengthened to the extent that different levels align around investing
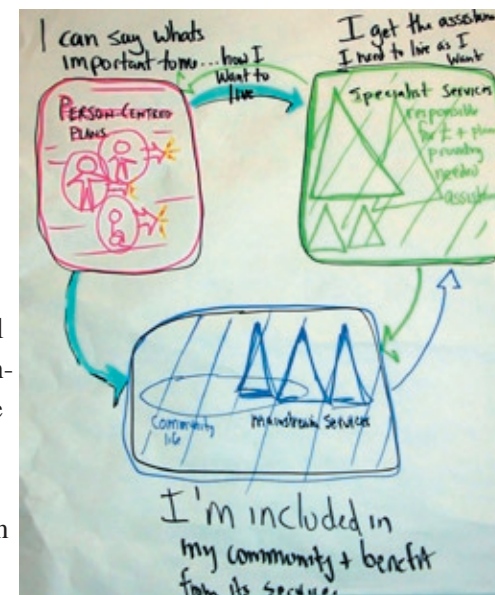
in social inclusion and the creation of greater personal capacity However, even while higher levels are learning, there is plenty of room for action closer to people with learning disabilities. No one has an excuse to opt out of taking some action that will move things along in the direction indicated by *Valuing People*.

We look forward to future opportunities for developing this framework through sharing in further reflection on the experience this action generates.