



## Promoting transparency, efficiency and accountability in Social Care Service Provision

How innovation can help funders and social care service providers manage the downturn, better demonstrate value and evidence outcomes.

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Following the recent downturn in global markets and resulting budget cuts in public spending, management of service providers face some of the toughest challenges in decades. None of this is more evident than in the area of social care in meeting the needs of the most vulnerable members of society.

The growing focus on personalised services, accountability, compliance and efficient work practices will place increasing pressure on provider management if the sector is to continue delivering the levels of service required by individuals, families and commissioners.

It is not an entirely new agenda item. For the past number of years providers and funders within disability and mental health related sectors have been looking at ways of delivering higher quality, more personalised services from limited resources. Some organisations have been actively looking at using a combination of best practice, person centered processes and new technology based services to explore new ways of meeting these demands.

*“It will be really important to demonstrate value through real life stories and also with real evidenced based information”*

***Quality Director, National Provider, iplanit client***

This white paper explores some of these themes and offers practical insights on what can work when committed management and teams work together with individuals and families to overcome cost restrictions and deliver new levels of service. It outlines the potential for new working practices fostered by more agile working which can support immediate cost savings in a range of areas. It will also show how this can also aid in the management of the workforce, helping optimise productivity and supporting the primary goal of being able to provide better services to individuals and the community.

## Demonstrating value – “Balancing person centered services and cost”

Since the advent of Putting People First and Valuing People Now, more people are being encouraged to have individualised, Person Centred Plans and develop good Person Centred Planning practices. As a result, many providers deliver person focused services, offering great quality support to individuals which is highly tailored to their needs.

*“Capturing progress from Person Centred Plans becomes even more important in today’s world”*  
**Area Manager, Regional Provider, iplanit client**

Such services can be labour intensive and expensive relative to “group” based services which may offer less to the individual in terms of meeting their specific needs and delivering on their outcomes.

However, despite this progress, many of these providers, in this age of austerity, are increasingly faced with potential funding cuts unless they can demonstrate the additional positive impact their services are having on these individual’s lives. To do this they need highly individualised reporting on the progress people are making against the outcomes agreed in their individual plans to support their dreams and aspirations.

*“The biggest impact is on the increased number, quality and visibility of truly person-centred outcomes. There’s now nowhere for staff to hide if they are under-ambitious for people or inattentive to people’s dreams. It has made a central contribution to our transformation into an organisation that measures its success by the achievement of person-centred outcomes.”*  
**CEO, Regional Provider, iplanit client**

Aspirico is working with providers to deliver this “evidence” in a format which can be used to justify additional costs to commissioners and funders. By gathering detailed information from service users, carers and their direct supporters, the iplanit service can help management gather this information easily and accurately.

## Lowering the “cost of compliance”

Across the sector, within adult social care and children’s

*“We can significantly reduce the time and effort in collecting information for purchasers and regulators”* - **Regional Director, National Provider, iplanit client**



services there has been a significant increase in the volume and range of statutory reporting requirements on providers. These include reporting on progress and delivering evidence of compliance with an increasing number of standards or KPI (Key Performance Indicators). In the UK these include CQC, QAF, PSA, Keys to Citizenship, DH, VPN, REACH, SCRC and CSSIW, not to mention provider specific, key performance indicators.

This reporting burden has created a significant administrative cost for CEO's and quality managers to create an up to date picture of organisational compliance in advance of audit or reporting requirements. In many cases, this work can be the equivalent of one or two full time employees even with regional providers. In addition to chasing the paper trail in gathering evidence of compliance with external and internal KPI, providers are also faced with the problem of validation in that often the "evidence" of compliance is disconnected from the individual plans and progress being made against outcomes in these plans.

As a result, when audit events occur, it can be expensive and time consuming to trawl through the paper trail and staff records to create accurate and verifiable reports. It can also be difficult to summarise this data across different areas such as region, location or activity area.

An example of this could be producing a report on levels of compliance (based on actual progress against agreed outcomes) with KPI achieved in different settings such as Residential, Care Home or Supported Living. A further drill down detail could be breaking this down into progress within Day Services, Floating Support and Outreach services.

*"We have introduced a culture of accountability and collaboration in a person centred way"*  
**Financial Director, iplanit client**

Aspirico is working with providers to deliver these KPI reports quickly, easily and without the burden of expensive administrative "overheads". These reports are automatically generated in a format which can be understood by trustees, commissioners, inspectors and senior management.

## Supporting contract tenders

The provision of services today is happening in a fast changing world where many providers have to compete for contracts and tender on the basis of cost and quality of services. With a backdrop of reduced funding, this trend is set to continue.

Providers who can attach detailed reports to tenders containing quantifiable feedback from the individuals they support demonstrating that they are meeting the outcomes agreed with those individuals, are more likely to be successful.

*“As Individual Budgets take hold, our biggest selling point will be the difference we make in people's lives”- **Regional Director, National Provider, iplanit client***

In the current climate of government cutbacks, service commissioners are also having to take a much more rigorous approach to seeking detailed accounts of how people lives are being changed as a result of their service. Traditional paper based approaches to gathering and quantifying client feedback can be labour intensive without the administration burden of significant paperwork.

Aspirico is working with providers to easily gather service user feedback directly from individuals, their carers and supporters on a regular basis. Aspirico can help providers build a live picture of client satisfaction and demonstrate that outcomes are being met for the individual and that their service is highly valued.

*There is no doubt that commissioners we have done business with take it as a signal of intent about person-centred planning and outcomes focus and it has definitely given us an edge in competitive tendering.”*  
**CEO, Regional Provider, iplanit client**

## Efficient work practices

In line with the above trends, providers need to “think out of the box” and innovate to allow them to “do more with less”. The majority of provider costs are staff related and efficient use of their time is becoming more paramount. This means looking to save money in areas such as paper administration, travel and internal meetings without impacting client service levels. One way of doing this is through the use of innovative services which reduce the overhead of “non client facing” activities.

*“We can target our time and money on those things people want and those things we know are effective....This can only help better all round decisions in the service and better lives for people as a consequence”*  
**Director, Regional Provider, iplanit client**

Aspirico is helping progressive providers use innovative solutions to reduce paperwork, smooth communications between team members and with

individuals and their carers, use escalations and alerts to avoid duplication of effort, cut administration costs and reduce time spent travelling to offices/meetings.

We do this by using online collaboration, person centered team forums/virtual meetings and encouraging home/mobile working which in turn helps reduce facilities costs.

*“iplanit complements our Person Centred Planning by enabling us to see that better outcomes are being achieved as agreed with the people we support by improving team effectiveness and communication.*  
**CEO, National Provider, iplanit client**

By using online services for frontline teams, providers and funders can also share good working practices and knowledge easily across organisations.

## Solutions are there: “Meeting the austerity challenge”

Aspirico offers a range of solutions which meet some or all of the above needs based on the Aspirico solutions framework. One of these is iplanit, which is delivered in partnership with Paradigm in the UK. iplanit is an affordable, secure, subscription based internet service delivering on the above needs with a range of providers and authorities across the UK working in areas such as learning disability, physical disability, older people and in mental health. Using iplanit, providers and funders are able to :

*“Innovations in online commercial services have set high standards for an increasingly mobile population. Many citizens’ expectations have shifted from traditional face-to-face, telephone or paper channels to more responsive 24/7 online personalised services and delivery through mobile devices.*  
**Cabinet Office – Govt ICT Strategy March 2011**

- ✓ support delivery of highly individualised, person focused services
- ✓ support service users involvement
- ✓ justify the additional cost of personalised service
- ✓ save administration costs
- ✓ reduce paperwork and reporting burden
- ✓ cut the time and cost involved in meeting statutory obligations by accessing finger tip reports on service effectiveness.
- ✓ use flexible working to reduce travel and facilities overhead
- ✓ show commissioners value for money
- ✓ provide management with information needed to inform strategic planning



- ✓ gather information for service user directly to demonstrate quality of services
- ✓ Easily capture, measure and communicate provider successes in improving outcomes and changing people's lives.

## Conclusion: Cost effective solutions can save money

Funder and provider organisations can forge ahead with innovative approaches to meeting the competing demands of cost management and increasing personalisation, compliance and competition.

A wide range of organisations internationally have demonstrated that these objectives can be achieved through sensible deployment of affordable, creative solutions, which have a very strong "Return On Investment" and can be funded out of savings made – even in an age of austerity.

*"Cloud computing should account for half of central government's new ICT spending by the end of 2015"*  
**Cabinet Office – Govt ICT Strategy March 2011**

### About Aspirico

*Aspirico is a market leader in creating innovative, person focused technology solutions for providers of services within the disability, mental health and older people sectors.*

*Our solutions have relevance for service providers, funders, advocacy groups, individuals and associations working in this sector. Users of Aspirico can help improve service quality, evidence outcomes, promote person centered practices, save money, improve compliance, empower service users and allow frontline staff to be more productive.*



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