

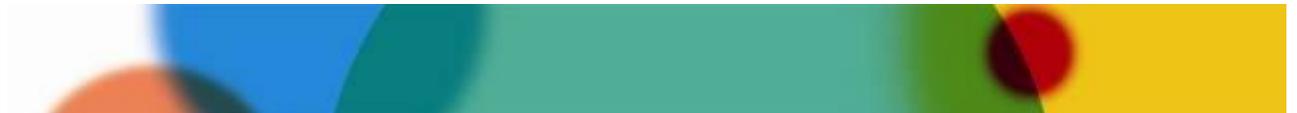
Worklessness and welfare to work in Lewisham

Robin Clarke and Sarah McDonnell
October 2010



Worklessness in Lewisham: OPM task

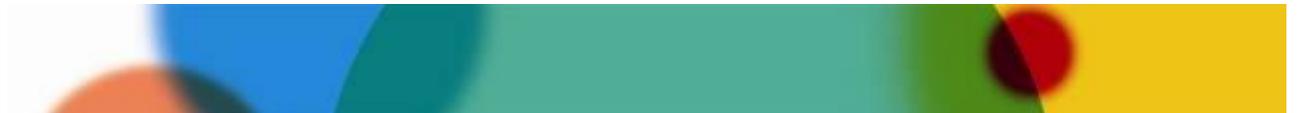
- Has been a priority issue for several years
- LSP commissioned deep qualitative and ethnographic research to understand Total Place 'counting'
- Life and work stories to map experiences and improvement suggestions
- Nine case studies and a ten minute film



Assessments, understanding needs and referrals: user experience

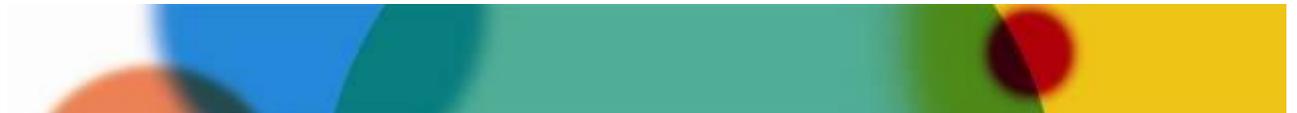
“There are loads of opportunities but if you don’t meet certain requirements you can’t access opportunities”

“She said I couldn’t do it, she said ‘you’re better off waiting until your daughter is 5 years old and then thinking about going back to work or college’. I just got up and walked off. By the time my daughter is 5, I will be too old for a lot of the apprenticeships they advertise and will have been unemployed for so long I probably wouldn’t bother anyway, I’d be so depressed”



Assessments, understanding needs and referrals

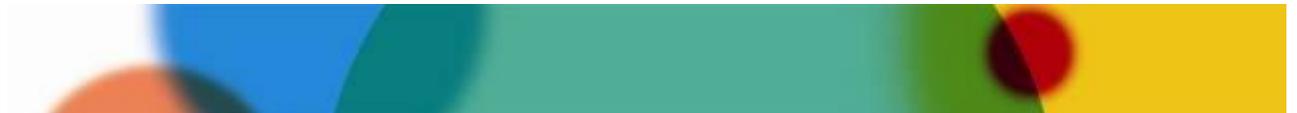
- **Main problem = pre-determined pathway with lack of defined outcomes leads to confusion**
- **People need access to a provider who understands individual circumstances and characteristics**
- **Bespoke approach could be more efficient**
- **Wider picture e.g. social capital is overlooked**
- **Tendency to pursue quick wins**



Flexibility – inflexibility: user experience

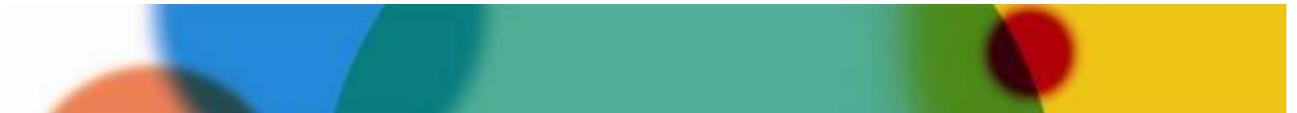
“All of these places I go to do things that I have already done...I have been told yet again how to write a CV which makes me angry...I will never get anywhere at this rate”

“I thought they don’t want me to work, they just want to me to keep training...I think if I didn’t want to find a job they would have just carried on sending me on training...doing what they wanted me to do, but I wasn’t going anywhere. It made them look like they were sending me somewhere”



Inflexibility in the system

- **Current system is constrained in its ability to flex**
- **Problems are criteria attached to jobs, welfare to work schemes and training opportunities**
- **Lack of flexibility can harm motivation and confidence**
- **For people with mental health issues this can increase anxiety and result in disengagement**



Voluntary work: user experience

“It interfered with my voluntary work which upset me as I thought the more voluntary work I do the better chance I have of getting a job”

“I was doing voluntary work and I had to stop doing that. I really cried...I couldn't stop crying. What is the point in me doing this (another course), I have done this, it was 16 weeks or something. I thought this was a total waste of time”



Voluntary work

- **Improves work readiness**
- **Builds confidence**
- **Welfare to work focuses resources on initiatives other than volunteering**
- **National policy limits time allowed for volunteering**
- **For people with long unemployment history and/or more complex personal history volunteering can be very important**



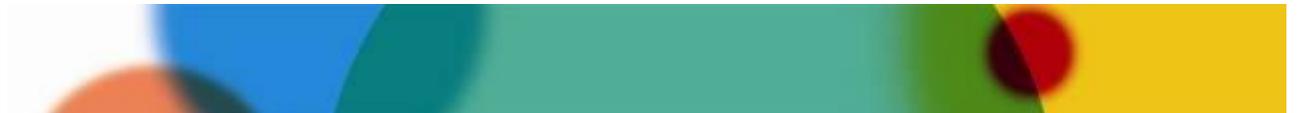
What do people mean by 'support'

- **Less:**
 - *“Was like a machine”*
 - *“Rushes me out of the door”*
- **More:**
 - *“Reassurance”*
 - *“More informal help”*
 - *“Non-threatening”*
 - *“More receptive to my needs”*
 - *“Treat me like a human being”*
 - *“Focused on what I was capable of doing”*

What does support mean in practical terms?

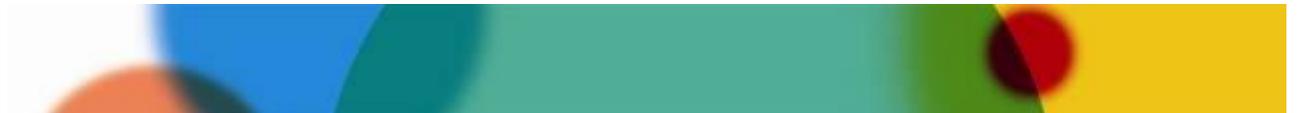
- **Personalised support:**
 - Taking a wider view of individual circumstances and needs
 - In developing overall support package
 - Adjusting individual programmes to account for experience and skills
 - Consistency e.g. case worker or advisor
- **Focus on outcomes not outputs**

“You need a personal development programme or a target to work towards, something that says this is what you want to do and here is how we will help you achieve it”



Recent developments in Lewisham

- **Is one of sixteen community budget areas**
- **Individual budget pilot**
- **Co-design work with DWP**



Journey Video | Lewisham Strategic Partnership - Microsoft Internet Explorer provided by Office for Public Management

http://www.lewishamstrategicpartnership.org.uk/journeyvideo.asp

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Abby - 43 years old
Carer for her mother. Taking carpentry course.

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Secure Page - Website Management - Document Repository
Website developed and maintained by Ben Mango. Design by Popcorn

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<http://www.lewishamstrategicpartnership.org.uk/totalplace.asp>

