

Community budgets and Worklessness

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What do we mean by 'worklessness'?

Job Centre Plus – *worklessness is a less familiar term than unemployment and extends beyond the unemployed. It includes those who are economically inactive, that is those who are of working age and not in work, full time education or training and those not actively seeking work.*

The Department of Work and Pensions - *people of working age who are not in formal employment, but who are looking for a job (the unemployed), together with people of working age who are neither formally employed nor looking for formal employment (the economically inactive).*

OPM's work with Lewisham focused on workless individuals and families with complex circumstances

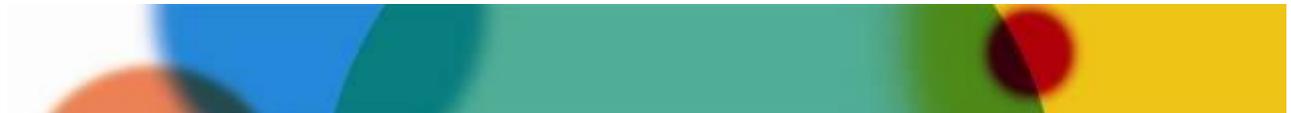
Worklessness in Lewisham – OPM experience

- **Worklessness: persistent problem and priority issue in Lewisham for several years**
- **Lewisham = 1 of 13 *Total Place* pilot sites > Lewisham used Total Place research to examine worklessness & welfare to work services available to local residents. OPM worked in-house with Lewisham LSP collaborating to design and deliver Total Place research**
- **OPM were commissioned to deliver deeper qualitative research at the end of the Total Place pilot > to really understand resident experiences OPM designed and delivered *ethnographic research***



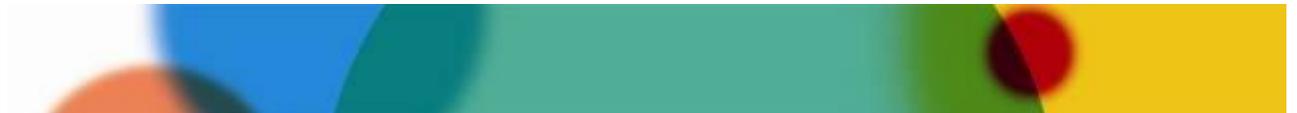
Worklessness: Total Place findings

- **System is incredibly complex: in Lewisham multiple funding streams support over 120 projects & programmes, delivered by over 50 providers**
- **Different objectives, targets and rules > result in fragmented delivery with no strategic overview or overall accountability**
- **Of the main sources of funding into Lewisham – which account for over 90% of spend on welfare-to-work provision locally – only one (Working Neighbourhoods Fund) is commissioned at borough level; the others are all commissioned regionally or nationally**
- **Customer insight work shows that the needs of the long-term unemployed are rarely met by a single agency – interventions are often required from a range of agencies, many of whom operate outside of the traditional welfare-to-work system**



Worklessness: ethnography findings

- **Current system leads users down pre-determined pathways, with a lack of defined outcomes resulting in confusion and frustration**
- **People need access to support which can address individual circumstances**
- **The contributions that could be made by social capital and social networks, are overlooked**
- **The existing system encourages the pursuit of outputs and quick wins over sustainable outcomes**
- **Bespoke approach could be more effective and efficient**



Worklessness: recommendations

- **Better services could be co-designed locally**
- **Government could support places by increasing the flexibilities and freedoms to tailor services to meet needs**
- **Streamline interventions – there is much duplication of provision and output based provision**
- **Volume of provision – people receive a lot of support without achieving outcomes**
- **Collaboration (strategic, financial, delivery) would help solve persistent worklessness and associated issues**
- **Pool budgets, focus on outcomes for service users**



Service user experience (1)

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

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

Service user experience (2)

“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”

Service user experience (3)

“[The systems rules] 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. I really cried...I couldn't stop crying. What is the point in me doing [another course], I have done this before and it was 16 weeks or something. I thought it was a total waste of time”



What would better support look like in practical terms?

- Stakeholders working around the individual or family, not the system
 - Understand and manage the whole journey out of worklessness
 - More personalised support taking a wider view of individual circumstances and needs in developing the support package
 - More flexible and responsive; adjusting individual programmes to account for experience and skills
 - Focused 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”*
- Stakeholders collaborating (strategy, commissioning, provision) ‘understand, plan, do, review’
 - Efficient – more coordinated spend, shared understanding of objectives, outcomes and evaluating progress

Recent developments in Lewisham

- **One of the Community Budget pilot areas**

- **Conducting an Individual Budget pilot**

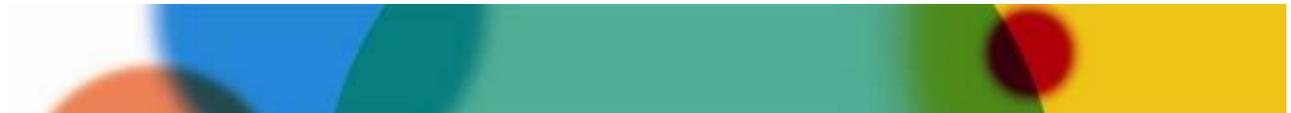
'The individualised budget approach pioneered in social care is worth testing in the field of worklessness. It would help to address the lack of ownership of a customer's journey in the current system. It would also ensure a personalised approach.'

- **Co-design work with DWP**



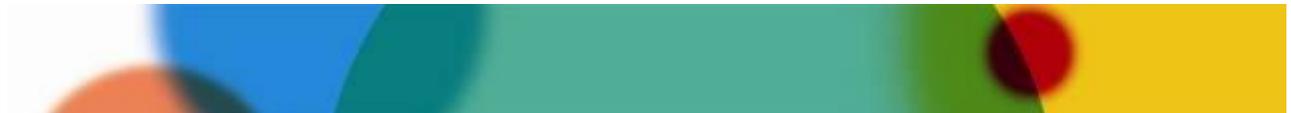
So, why might *Community Budgets* help...?

- Those who are workless with complex personal circumstances, report the current system doesn't work > locally coordinated, holistic solutions are needed
- Budgets and programmes of welfare to work support come from the top down and don't understand or respond to the reality on the ground
- Devolving funding (currently sitting in Whitehall) to local level under a Community Budget, could provide the core around which local efforts are shaped
- Coordinated partner agency roles and responsibilities could produce efficiencies and better outcomes (implementing this not necessarily easy!)
- Community *Based* Budgeting > co-designed solutions > need to understand local forces and drivers, need to consider the contribution *Big Society*, or community/peer support, could make



Discussion....

1. Do you think Community Budgets & Community Based Budgeting offer a way of tackling worklessness? What other issues might they tackle concurrently?
2. Do Community Budgets need to focus on a particular issue, or just an individual/family?
3. How will Community Budgets differ from previous policies which emphasise a more collaborative and coordinated approach (local partnership working, *Think Family*, *Supporting People*, pooled budgets)
4. How would Community Budgets be designed, led and managed by partners locally (stakeholder relationships, roles, objectives)? What planning and support might be needed?
5. What does success look like and for whom?
6. How would you evaluate the success Community Budgets? (and how long would you expect to wait to see results?)
7. How might contributing partners share the success of Community Budgets?
8. What factors (i.e. political, financial, local) could contribute to the success of Community Budgets? What are the incentives?
9. What factors (i.e. political, financial, local) could be a barrier to the success of Community Budgets? What are the disincentives?



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

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Total Place Lewisham Video



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

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





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