



Commissioning case study

Combining personalisation and community empowerment in Leeds

adult social care # personalisation # community empowerment # social investment
voluntary and community sector

The headlines

- Leeds is piloting neighbourhood schemes called Local Links to provide community-based support for older people instead of or in addition to traditional home care services. Local Links is a new model for social care and capacity building known as 'combining personalisation and community empowerment'.
- The pilots have resulted in less social isolation, greater independence and confidence, reduced need for care, and a growth in community capacity and social capital.
- The intention is that Local Links will be funded through social investment. To facilitate this, Leeds was a partner in setting up DERiC, a social investment finance intermediary with a strong public sector ethos.

Engaging with the community has meant that vulnerable older people have become much more valued and local people who are community supporters – trained and supported volunteers – have been able to use their involvement to develop further their expertise and skills, which will be of real use to them in other settings or opportunities.

Ritchard Brazil, Programme Manager, DERiC

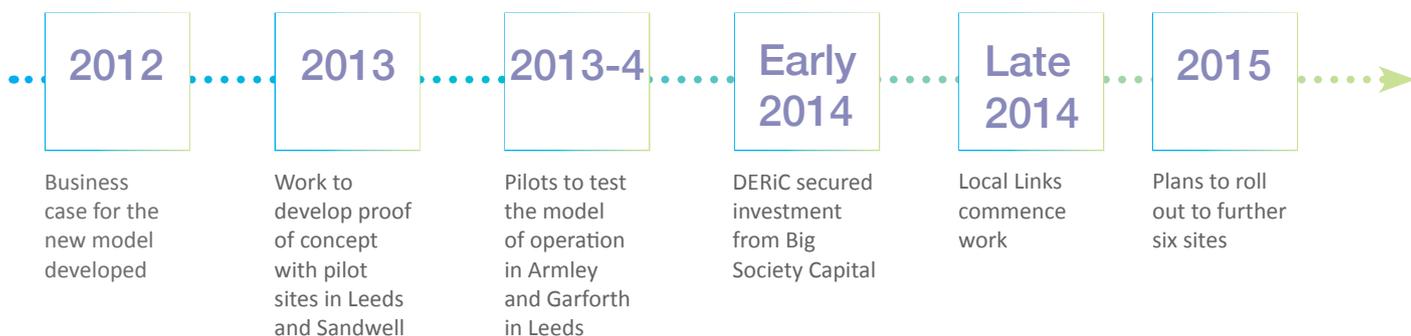
What is the context?

The most recent census (2011) indicates that Leeds has seen a five per cent growth in the overall population since 2001. Over the same time period the number of people over the age of 85 has risen by 15 per cent and is set to rise significantly between now and 2020. Almost 20 per cent of Leeds residents are now over the age of 60. Of these, approximately 28 per cent, 42,000 people, live alone. Between 2010 and 2030 the number of people over 65 living alone is predicted to rise by over 37 per cent and those over 75 by 40 per cent. Faced with this scenario of rising demand in a climate of increasing austerity, coupled with a growing concern that services for older people should offer them greater control and choice, Leeds City Council decided that a radical new approach to older people's care was required.

'Better Lives for People in Leeds' is a commitment by the council to give older people more say in how they live their lives and to release them from dependency. The council is able to build on a well-established scheme of neighbourhood networks which work in local communities to provide support for older people including befriending, luncheon clubs and other social activities. There are 37 networks in Leeds, each covering a specific geographic area, run by and for older and disabled people. They work with more than 21,000 people over the age of 60 and are supported by 1900 local volunteers. The aims of the networks are to:

- promote independence, health and well-being;
- develop self-care programmes;
- reduce isolation and improve quality of life;
- increase involvement and participation in the community; and
- give individuals information to support choice and control

What commissioning and delivery model has been adopted?



In 2012 Leeds began exploring a model, 'combining personalisation and community empowerment', which is also being deployed in Belfast and Sandwell. The model would combine the support already offered through the neighbourhood networks with the newly-introduced personal budgets for social care, and would be funded through social investment. Its stated benefits are:

- the provision of incentives for communities to deliver support to vulnerable people;
- delivering an enhanced quality of support;
- over time, reducing the cost of providing social support which enables some savings to be reinvested by communities themselves; and
- a reduction in reliance on statutory services

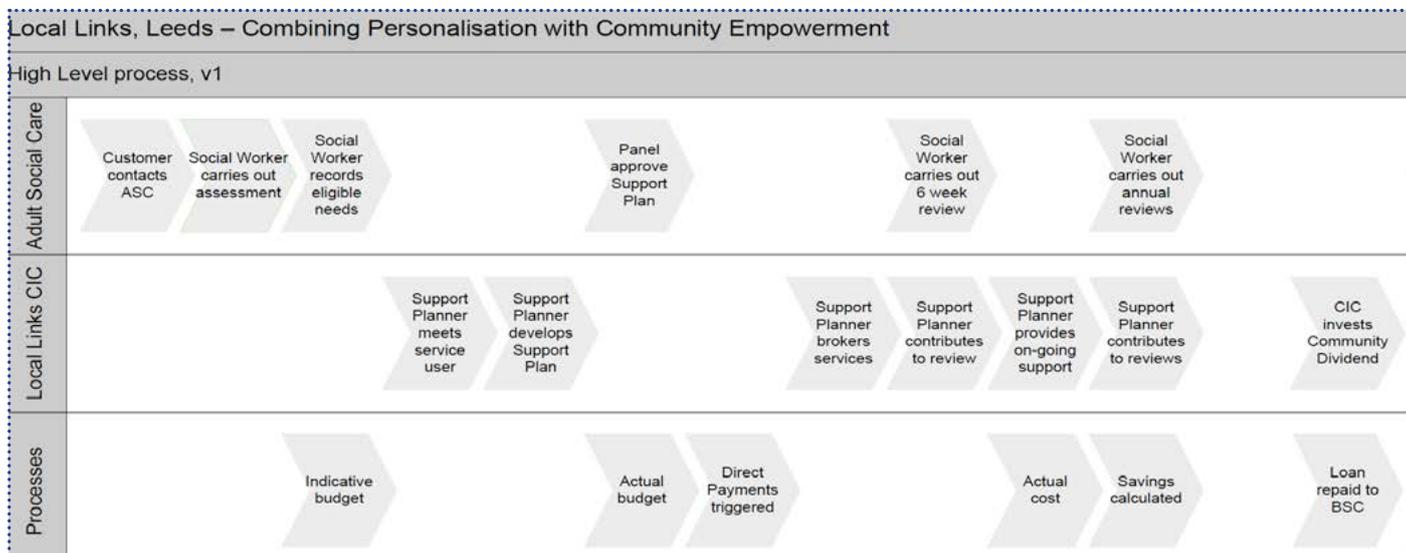
In Leeds, the new model was badged as 'Local Links'.

The Local Links approach was originally piloted with two neighbourhood networks, Armley Helping Hands and

Garforth Neighbourhood Elders Team, and a further six schemes are in the pipeline. Under the scheme, the networks employ Local Links staff to do support planning and brokerage with older people, and to produce care packages that include voluntary and community support tailored to the individual's needs. These staff also work at increasing volunteering so more support can be offered within the community.

If an older person needs care or support, a referral is made to adult social care as usual. The individual is assessed by a social worker and if they are eligible, a personal budget will be provided. A support planner (a health or social care professional within the Local Links team) then works with the individual to develop an individual support plan using relevant statutory services in addition to voluntary and community support, helping people to become more independent and less isolated. The proposed tailored package of support is passed back to adult social care for approval before Local Links organise or 'broker' the care.

Social dividend split between community investment and Leeds City Council



Local Links can also manage personal budgets on behalf of an individual if the customer does not want to receive their budget as a direct payment and to manage it.

The advantage of this approach is that the support planner knows what support is available in that community, including activities and support offered by the neighbourhood network and other voluntary, community or faith-based organisations in the local area. The aim is to integrate these other kinds of support with statutory services, such as home care support, to meet assessed eligible needs, and to make sure people get the support that is right for them. An important break with the past is that Local Links neighbourhood networks now work with those eligible for home care and other services. Sometimes the support can be as simple as matching an individual with someone else with similar interests or needs; for example, a widow who was unable to manage the journey to visit her husband's grave was matched with another lady who was able to drive and whose husband was buried in the same graveyard. The two now visit the graves together and stop off for tea and a chat on the way home, thus reducing their isolation and enhancing their wellbeing.

The social investment element of the model has taken more than two years to develop and is still in the final stages of negotiation. In the meantime, the council has funded the networks to commence delivery of Local Links. Investment will come up front from a social investment finance intermediary that raises funds from a variety of public and private sources and invests them to achieve social purposes. The intermediary working with Leeds, Belfast and Sandwell is DERiC, a community interest company that was set up specifically for the purpose and is made up of people with a predominantly public sector background. An initial fund of more than £1 million obtained from Big Society Capital is already in place and DERiC's initial investment in Leeds was £150,000 per pilot. The basic premise is that, by maximising social capital and by reducing the need for high-cost care packages, resources will be released in the form of a community or social dividend that will be shared by the council and Local Links. While Local Links will reinvest its share in the service, the council will use its share to repay DERiC, which will in turn make a return to Big Society Capital. The council is also acting as guarantor to the loan from DERiC.

In the future, besides scaling up the pilots across Leeds, the council is planning to enable Local Links to act as the manager of direct payments or individual service funds. It is anticipated not only that this will cost less than a similar service offered by the local authority, but also that it could open up the opportunity for people to act collectively by pooling their direct payments to meet similar needs for care or support, which Local Links would deliver or buy from alternative providers.

Who are the key partners?

The main delivery partners are the neighbourhood networks which have been in existence in Leeds since 1994. Armley Helping Hands is a national award-winning organisation based in the inner south of the city, while Garforth Net is based in rural east Leeds and has an outstanding reputation. Public Health has a keen interest in the model as it jointly funds the neighbourhood networks with Adult Social Care within the council, and there is wider interest from clinical commissioning groups in the Local Links' preventative approach to health and wellbeing.

Financial partners are Big Society Capital and DERiC, itself a partnership organisation whose board members come from Leeds, Belfast and Medway councils and from the Association of Directors of Adult Social Services. In its work on combining personalisation and community empowerment so far, DERiC has formed partnerships with Belfast and Sandwell as well as with Leeds.



“ The elderly and vulnerable may not always receive the care they need due to a system under strain. Social investments are making it possible to raise the standard and depth of care for the vulnerable in our communities. We are determined to see more programmes like this across the country and will be working closely with Leeds City Council to ensure that all local authorities understand what can be achieved through accessing differing sources of funding. ”

Nick O'Donohoe, Chief Executive, Big Society Capital

What has been the impact?

The benefits anticipated by the project are:

- reduced social isolation;
- older people remain independent for longer;
- earlier, less costly interventions and a reduction in the cost of care; and
- an increase in community capacity and social capital

The focus to date has been on developing the model rather than on gathering evidence and as yet the numbers have been too small to provide quantitative data on impact. However, the pilots have given confidence in the model by generating a number of good individual stories and there has been positive feedback on quality of life improvements, especially in tackling loneliness. The focus now is on getting more individuals transferred from council social care planning to Local Links brokerage as until this transfer occurs in higher volumes the direct cashable savings forecast will not be achieved. Leeds plans to address the lack of evidence during the next stage of the work through an evaluation of the impact on the system as a whole, and recognises that identifying and realising cashable savings is essential for the success of the social investment mechanism.

Case study, Mary

Highly respected in her local community, Mary, aged 88, had an active life running a majorette troop for many years. However, a car accident had a major impact on her independence, and meant that she was no longer able to run the troop. She had to spend a lot of time at home and became isolated and depressed. Through Local Links, a range of different approaches were taken to help Mary regain her independence, including support from a volunteer and attendance at Armley Helping Hands. For Mary it was the relationship she developed with the volunteer that was really important and that helped to overcome her emotional distress.

Case study, Elaine

Elaine, who is 70 years old, suffers mobility problems and was recently bereaved. She now receives a range of voluntary support, including social activities, regular visits and help with her shopping. She has reduced her home care support package and stopped taking antidepressants.

What have been the key elements of success?

Leeds was extremely fortunate in having a strong base of 37 well-established neighbourhood networks on which to build the Local Links pilots. For the past 20 years or so, Leeds has helped these organisations to develop and has supported them in spite of financial pressures. The networks now have the security of assured funding for the next three years, giving them a firm foundation on which to further develop their activities and services. Because the networks and the committees that run them are predominantly formed by local older people, they have their finger on the pulse of what is happening in the local community and understand the needs and aspirations of older residents.

The Local Links scheme, and indeed neighbourhood networks more broadly, have strong cross-party support amongst city councillors, many of whom sit on neighbourhood network management committees.

“ We’re proud to say the networks are a fundamental cornerstone of everything we want adult social care in Leeds to be and as they grow and evolve we hope they can continue to point the way for others to follow. ”

Councillor Adam Ogilvie, Executive Member for Adult Social Care, Leeds City Council

There have, however, been some significant challenges. While social workers are broadly positive about the changes, this has not always translated into service users being passed on to Local Links. One reason for this may be that, although assessment and support planning are considered as separate stages in the process, in reality they are often intertwined. A social worker may largely have completed the support plan while carrying out the assessment and may not therefore feel the need to pass it on to Local Links to develop. Leeds has therefore decided to fund a post, embedded in the social care team, specifically focused on getting the handover right and on championing the new way of working.

What has been learnt?

Mick Ward, Head of Commissioning for Adult Social Care at the council, stresses the importance of paying attention to the minutiae of the processes and systems that sit beneath the vision and working through how they will be affected and might need to change. He cites as an example the idea of direct payments being held by Local Links and perhaps spent collectively on behalf of a group of people. This sort of innovation raises all sorts of questions, such as who owns the bank accounts and what happens if someone dies or goes into hospital, all of which have to be ironed out in detail.

He also advises thinking through who will be affected by the changes and engaging with them from the outset, something he believes would perhaps have led to better rates of handover by social workers to Local Links. Involving support services such as human resources, legal, finance and property at the earliest stage is also a lesson he would draw from Leeds' experience.

‘ Long and complex projects such as this have a tendency to drift if not well managed or if momentum is lost. Therefore maintaining a sense of pace throughout is critical. ’

The process of creating a social investment model has been long and difficult, and even now is not completely bottomed out. Leeds found that social investors were reluctant to invest directly in third sector organisations like the neighbourhood networks and would not do so in a council, hence the necessity for setting up a social investment finance intermediary. For those contemplating a similar route, Big Society Capital believes that DERiC has the potential to create a large network of local, sustainable registered social enterprises making a huge difference to the lives of vulnerable individuals, as well as proving a cash-saving model to commissioners across social care and health.

Who can I contact?

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Other useful information

<https://betterlivesleeds.wordpress.com/>