



Enabling Good Lives for People

Rachel Cassen, Director, Leap



The current context

- ▶ Actions to reform disability services and to improve the lives of people with disabilities have to date focussed almost exclusively on the **supply** side.
- ▶ In order to transform disability services and to enact positive and lasting change in people's lives we must also put in place mechanisms on the **demand** side and develop the landscape of support.
- ▶ One such mechanism is individual budgets which give people who require support more choice and control over that support.



Individualised funding

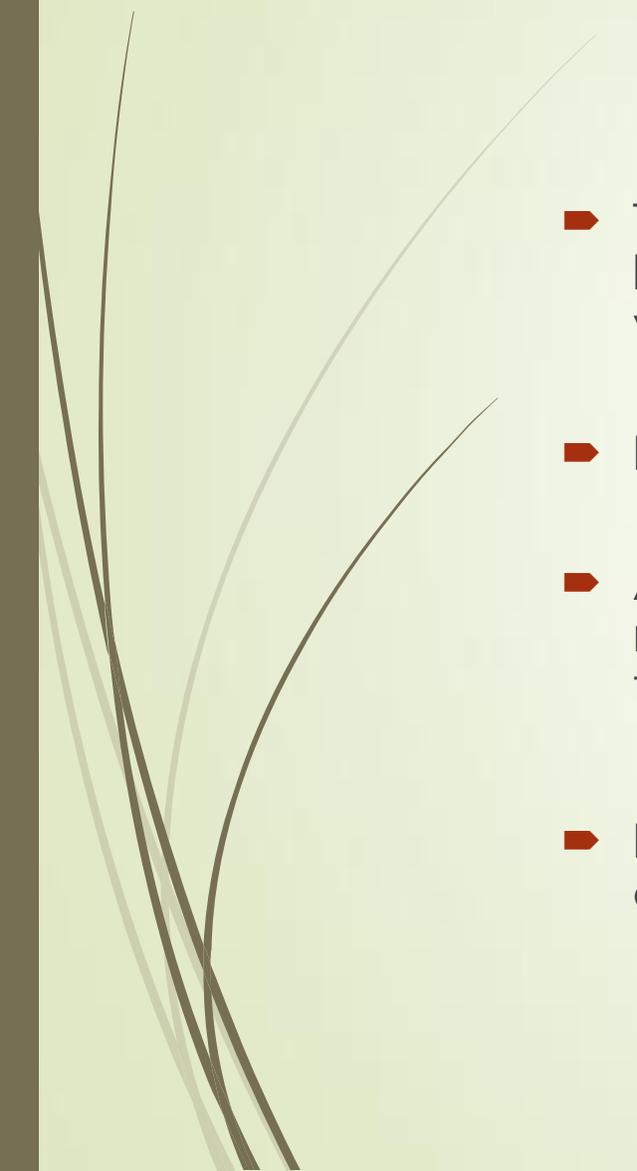


- ▶ We know that across the life course our well-being is achieved through:
 - our relationships
 - our sense of belonging
 - our roles such as son, daughter, brother, student, church member, scout or scout leader, neighbour, employee and so on.

- ▶ The key to maximising the effective use of individual budgets is to assist people and families to use them to build an ordinary life with relationships, belonging and valued roles.



A new Landscape of support

- ▶ Today we understand the centrality of love and family relationships in the lives of all people and no more so than in the lives of those who are vulnerable to social rejection and exclusion.
 - ▶ Institutions in Ireland are becoming a thing of the past.
 - ▶ As the old models of support are decommissioned; we need to put in place new community based supports to build the resilience of people and families and not simply abandon people to their own resources
 - ▶ If individualised funding is to work it needs to be underpinned by some key community based components.
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A new landscape of support

- ▶ Supportive networks of people and families who are accessing individual budgets
 - ▶ Knowledge – access to information
 - ▶ Support to live a typical life in community
 - ▶ Opportunities to share stories of success and to demonstrate what is possible
 - ▶ Practical and financial support
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Using individual budgets to create good lives

- ▶ Individual budgets are a means not an end in themselves.
- ▶ An individual budget will not create a 'good' meaningful, rich, inclusive life.
- ▶ You cannot buy a good life.
- ▶ Neither can you place the responsibility for a good life at the door of the service system.
- ▶ However an individual budget paired with a vision of a good life for a person is far more likely to lead to a good life, a typical life.



Essential elements for successful utilisation of Individualised Funding (money can't do this)

- ▶ Assisting families to develop and extend their vision
- ▶ Lifestyle planning and goal setting
- ▶ Putting plans into action
- ▶ Building informal networks
- ▶ Safeguarding – sustainability



Intentional application of money to support good lives

- ▶ It is not really about the money.
 - ▶ The funding simply allows for the person to connect to the valued world using tailored support.
 - ▶ It is holding a shared vision of a good life that will get the person to where they want to be.
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Value for Money

- ▶ Individual budgets cost less in the aggregate.
- ▶ This means that while some people's support will cost more, the majority will offer cost savings.
- ▶ Recognise the value to be gained (fiscally and socially) when people with disabilities become active social and economic contributors, part of the prosperity of a community rather than dependants.
- ▶ Integration has to be seen as a goal, not as a way of minimizing costs.



Individual Budgets

- ▶ Part of a wider context of global reform of social services away from a focus on needs (which creates dependency).
 - ▶ to approaches which build relationships and valued roles of a person.
 - ▶ does not divorce them from the context of their natural supports e.g. family, regular community members.
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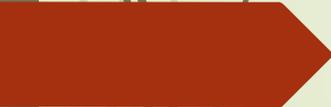


Challenges



- ▶ Raising the culturally held low expectations of people with disabilities.
- ▶ Understanding the complementary nature of services.
- ▶ Believing in the natural authority of families.
- ▶ Creating flexible systems.
- ▶ Making it available to adults, children/families and unpaid carers.
- ▶ You cannot self-direct provider controlled service.





Thank you

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