**Introduction**

Personalisation is both a way of *thinking* and a way of *doing*. It cannot be viewed solely as a new system that social workers need to learn to operate. Personalisation is an umbrella term used to describe both an ideology and a way of delivering services and support that recognises service users as experts. The philosophy and principles underpinning personalisation, such as self-determinism, dignity and choice, complement the five basic values of social work described by: Human dignity and worth, social justice, service to humanity, integrity and competence (BASW, 2002¹). This understanding, however, should include a critical exploration of the potentially contested relationship between personalisation, citizenship and consumerism.

Officially introduced in government policy in December 2007 with the publication of Putting people first (HM, 2007²), it is not specific to social care and started as a cross government agenda in 2003. Many of the principles and practice are also relevant to disabled children and their families.

<table>
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<th>Terminology</th>
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<td>Personalisation refers to individuals having as much choice and control as possible in the way support is designed and delivered. <strong>Personalisation</strong> means more than personal or individual budgets. Whilst providing cash resources to service users is a key feature of the agenda for transformation of adult social care, central to the agenda is the concept <strong>co-production</strong>, (SCIE (2009) Key resources 1) a term used to highlight the importance of recognising and utilising the expertise of service users in shaping their own support and the design and culture of services. This challenges the dominant role of the professional and focuses on the service user becoming a valued participant rather than a passive recipient. Duffy (2006³) refers to this as a shift from the <strong>professional gift model</strong> to the <strong>citizenship model</strong>.</td>
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**Key curriculum issues**

The curriculum should provide opportunities for students to critically engage with knowledge, ideologies, theories, values, roles and skills shaping the personalisation agenda. Learning should take place prior to, during and after placement experience, providing students with opportunities to prepare, experience and critically reflect. The inclusion of service user/carer perspective and contribution in this area of work is of central importance. The following key topics/areas should be included:

- **Analysis of the legal, political, economic and historical influences shaping the personalisation agenda** including an understanding of the influence of the Disabled People’s Movement and principles of **independent living** and the **social model of disability** (Glasby and Littlechild, 2009⁴), along with a critical exploration of personalisation in light of substantial cuts in social care budgets (Lymberry, 2012⁵).

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- **Service user groups:** Consideration of the impact of personalisation on different service user groups: learning disability, physical and sensory disabilities, older people, people with mental health problems, parents of disabled children and service users with multiple and complex needs. Students should consider the challenges faced by service user groups currently under-represented within social care services including those from black and minority ethnic communities (Social Care TV, Key resources 2), lesbian and gay people, people living in rural areas and self-funders (Tisdall in Gardner, 2011a vi). Students should study the early evaluation report of individual budgets. (Glendinning et al (2008) Key resources 3).

- **A value base for practice:** Educators should engage students with the principles and values underpinning personalisation. They should explore the contentious values within social care: notions of deserving and undeserving, public perception and media coverage of spending public money (Community Care, Key resources 4). Students should consider the congruence between rights, responsibilities, assessment and management of risks whilst promoting choice and self-directed support. Thus students can understand the central role of power, and seek to reduce its impact wherever possible in developing anti-discriminatory and anti-oppressive approaches to working within a personalisation context.

- **Social and medical/Individual model:** Students should consider the extent to which personalisation reflects social model thinking, using a range of concepts such as paternalism, partnership, empowerment, citizenship, consumerism and marketisation of care. Students should have opportunities to engage with key critiques of personalisation including the fragmentation of services, and how, by individualising support the collective voice may be lost (Spandler, 2004 viii), thus failing to see disability as *quintessentially collective* (French and Swain, 2006 viii). Students should critically explore the contentious nature of merging health and social care budgets (DH (2011) Key Resources 5)

- **Person-centred practice (PCP):** PCP has secured a central feature in most government policy relating to the delivery of all social care. Students should develop their understanding of the underpinning theory and values informing PCP. Students should be supported to use their placements to develop their person-centred skills including listening and focusing on what people want and enabling individuals to exercise choice and control wherever possible. (Sanderson and Lewis, 2012 ix)

- **The narratives of personalisation:** An understanding of the how personalisation has emerged as a policy narrative and mobilised wide-ranging political support. Students should consider the convergence and divergence of ideas, definitions and interpretations of personalisation and how this is being translated to practice (Needham, 2011 x).

- **Service user narrative/Service user voice** should feature as a key element in this area of the curriculum. Students should consider the value of narrative inquiry in self-assessment and self-directed support.

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generally (Gardner, 2011b). They need both a theoretical understanding of narrative inquiry and opportunities to engage with service users and carers who have experienced directing their own support (Caroline Tomlinson, Key resources 6). Students should consider the value and power of service user voice in shaping the personalisation agenda.

- **The process of self-directed support**: An understanding of self-assessments, eligibility criteria, resource allocation systems, support planning and outcome focused reviews (SCIE e-learning, Key resources 7).

- **The changing role of social work**: Educators can support students to critically explore changing tasks, functions and roles such as: navigators, advisors, enablers and brokers. Students should be supported to engage with the anxieties and tensions these changes present in relation to the future of social work and the professional basis of the role (Renshaw, 2008xii; Leece and Leece, 2010xiii).

- **Safeguarding and personalisation**: Students should explore the contentious nature and ideological polarisation of this discourse. A key question is whether personalisation leads to vulnerable people becoming more or less safe. (Duffy and Gillespie, 2009xiv; Manthorpe et al, 2009xv; Flynn, 2006xvi). Consideration should be given to the social work role within this context.

**Links to other curriculum areas, including curriculum guides (⊗):**
The overall aim should be to embed personalisation throughout the curriculum. It may also be useful to teach it as a stand-alone topic to familiarise and engage students with key concepts and critiques. Links can be made with the areas of Mental health ⊗, Substance use ⊗, Neglect, violence and abuse of children and adults ⊗.

**Key resources**


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xvi Flynn, M (2006) Developing the role of personal assistants. Researched and compiled for a Skills for Care pilot project examining new and emerging roles in social care. University of Sheffield, 28 March, LSE.
4. Community Care: Sex and personalisation.
   http://www.communitycare.co.uk/Articles/10/08/2010/115069/service-users-personal-budgets-and-amsterdam.htm
7. Putting personalisation into practice. SCIE e-learning resource http://www.swapbox.ac.uk/462/