### Domain | Personalisation Context
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1. **Professionalism**
   *Identify and behave as a professional social worker committed to professional development.*

As a social worker, we need to be clear about what we mean by acting professionally.

- Is professionalism solely understood in terms of what your employer expects you to do or what the legislation requires you to do? **OR**
- Is it wider than this? Can a service user decide what is professional? **AND**
- What about your own belief and values about what social work is? Does this inform your interpretation of how to behave professionally?

Service users will be highly dependent on your support to advocate for them in making choices and enabling them to take control of their own lives. This may challenge your own understanding of behaving professionally or the expectation of your employer. As the personalisation agenda evolves, service users are choosing different unique options. At times this may not fit easily into the traditional administrative models within which you are working. You will need to balance your professional accountability to your employer in terms of policies and procedures whilst remaining true to the principles of personalisation that promote service user choice and control wherever possible. Sometimes you will feel torn in acting professionally. Sometimes you may have to challenge the system in order to act professionally. Your role as a social work student should be to identify and critically reflect on these experiences through supervision with your practice educator.

2. **Values and Ethics**

*Apply social work ethical principles and values to guide professional practice.*

As noted in chapter 2, personalisation is about thinking and about doing. Embracing the principles and values underpinning personalisation are essential if notions of choice and control are to become more than words for service users, carers and their families. As a student you will need to identify and critically engage with ethical dilemmas that present themselves within a personalisation context. You will need to develop your skills in ethical reasoning as you balance and respect rights and entitlements of service users with bureaucratic systems that may appear inflexible and in need of change. At times this may be challenging as government policy and organisational policies tend to readily refer to notions of choice, control and self-directed support without fully embracing them within practice delivery. As a practitioner you need to demonstrate how notions of choice, control and service user expertise are being promoted in your practice. This includes every interaction with service users and
extends further than offering choice and control through a personal budget.

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<th>3. Diversity</th>
<th>This is central to the personalisation context. An understanding of person centred thinking theory is required to ensure that practice is underpinned by the recognition that support and services need to be tailored to the individual needs of service users. Skills in the application of person centred practice will be useful in recognising diversity and applying an anti-discriminatory approach. The ability to engage with individuals and their narrative rather than basing practice on information provided solely from other professionals is required to ensure service users are central to the process. At times this will require working creatively within rigid paperwork and administrative systems which may not naturally allow for flexible approaches to support. An understanding of the experience many service users and their families have encountered over the years in accessing support is required. Sharing power and promoting service user expertise can be difficult for individuals who have not experienced this before. Finding ways of supporting individuals to make choices in their lives whilst feeling supported by professionals is a key part of an individual’s journey to taking control in their lives. Similarly your role as a social worker within a personalisation context may involve challenging decisions or systems that fail to support the principles of self-directed support or disempower service users. As indicated by the recent Community Care Survey of Personalisation (June 2013), many social workers admit feeling that they lack knowledge and understanding of personalisation in practice. As a student you may have opportunities to support others in their learning process and/or challenge practice that is not promoting the principles of personalisation.</th>
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<td><strong>Recognise diversity and apply anti-discriminatory and anti-oppressive principles in practice.</strong></td>
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| 4. Rights, justice and economic well-being | In chapter 2 we discussed the difference between the professional gift model whereby individuals are viewed as passive recipients of care and the citizenship model based on seeing people as having rights and entitlements and contributing to society. Within a personalisation context, the principles underpinning the citizenship model and the social model of disability (see chapter 2) are central to promoting social justice and well-being. Promoting the rights of individuals can be done at many different levels. Firstly, it is important to have a good understanding of the law and policy relating too personalisation. In addition it is helpful to keep up to date with the emerging legislation which is likely to endorse notions of choice and control with the provision of statutory duties. Advocating for individuals through your understanding and sharing of knowledge around legislation and policy is central to promoting and advancing human |
rights and well-being. Advocacy at both individual and citizen level are key within the personalisation context as individuals become empowered to take control of the design of their own support. As well at working at an individual level to promote rights and well-being, social workers also have a role to play in organisational change. This includes sharing knowledge, shaping services/support and at times challenging current practice and attitudes. At a time of shrinking resources and changing notions of the social work role, some social workers are very suspicious of personalisation and the future of social work. It is important that you take time to understand why this might be the case and that you consider how you position yourself within this discourse. You will need to adopt a reflective and reflexive approach in your practice and supervision to explore these debates carefully and to shape your practice accordingly.

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Knowledge is power. This is true for both service users and professionals. Your understanding of the law and policy guiding the personalisation is crucial if you are to advocate effectively on behalf of service users. You also need to feel confident in this knowledge to share it with service users. In particular you should be aware of legislation relating to direct payments and emerging legislation relating to personal budgets. You should also be aware of the policy developments and political landscape in relation to personalisation dating back to Putting People First (HM, 2007).

In addition you should develop a clear understanding of the historical influences shaping personalisation. In particular the Independent Living Movement and the changing shape of welfare over the years dating back to the 19th century Poor Laws. Understanding how service users have influenced and shaped policy direction, along with an appreciation of the draconian ways people have been treated in society is central to informing the basis upon which you engage with individuals and their families in current practice.

Engaging with theory is central to all social work practice. Within a personalisation context a clear understanding of the social model (as discussed in chapter 2) is central to practice. Likewise, an understanding of person centred thinking and person centred practice (chapter 2) will inform your practice as well as providing a practical dimension to how you can work with individuals and families to enable them to direct their own support. The following website will provide a collection of tools and literature which can support your practice (www.helensandersonassociates.co.uk)
6. **Critical reflection and analysis**  
Apply critical reflection and analysis to inform and provide rationale for professional decision-making.  
To work effectively within a personalisation context, social workers need to be confident and acutely aware of the values shaping their practice. As discussed in chapter 2, personalisation is not just a different way of doing things, it is a different way of thinking about things. As you enter practice you will be expected to engage with a steep learning curve in terms of understanding the organisation, the systems, the paperwork and the team dynamics. It can be tempting and sometimes easier to fall into the organisational regime, particularly as a student with less experience and power. It is important, however, that you remember the discussion above about map reading and map making. Personalisation calls for practitioners who can be curious and creative in their approach and at times can reject traditional models of practice. In this sense following other peoples structure or relying only, on reading maps may limit your own ability to develop the confidence to experiment with new ways of working in uncharted territories, i.e becoming a map-maker. As a social work practitioner working in complex, challenging and fast paced contexts, it is important that you create space to reflect on your practice, consider the values, theories, politics and economic influences impacting on your assessments, interventions and professional judgements.

7. **Intervention and Skills**  
Use judgment and authority to intervene with individuals, families and communities to promote independence, provide support and prevent harm, neglect and abuse.  
This is perhaps the most challenging aspect of personalisation and self-directed support. Personalisation operates on the basis of rejecting a paternalistic approach and the sense that interventions are imposed upon people. Instead the premise for practice is that service users and their families are experts in their own lives. Using their own experience, focussing on their own objectives, individuals make decisions about the support they need and how it should be provided. The role of the social worker is to enable and facilitate this process rather than to control it. At times this will be contentious as individuals consider the balance of promoting independence and the potential risks involved. As social workers we may perceive risks in different ways to service users. Developing skills in working collaboratively with service users and their families is crucial in ensuring that the promotion of independence versus risk and harm are carefully considered and explored. Adopting a person centred approach to positive risk taking which places the service user at the centre of the process and focuses on developing a plan tailored to the specific risks for an individual in their particular setting is essential. As a social worker, there are key points within the self-directed support model at which we need to engage with issues concerning the balancing of independence versus risk. At the point of assessment, the role of the social worker may
involves questioning or challenging the service users' assessment of risk. This ensures that discussions happen early on in the process. At the stage of support planning, careful risk management is a process the social worker can contribute to. Identification of potential risks along with an honest exchange with service users can provide an opportunity to consider alternative measures or support that allow choice and minimise risks. Personalising reviews in terms of frequency and format allows risk management to become meaningful for the service user and their support. Encouraging the service user to focus on outcomes when planning their support highlights some of the potential risks that may need to be managed in a more intensive way whilst acknowledging other risks that are acceptable and do not require specific safeguards. The adoption of a person-centred approach to risk management allows a more thorough proportionate response to risk as opposed to imposing more traditional, standardised, and inflexible, risk management tools.

| 8. Contexts and organisations | One of the most demanding roles as a social work is understanding how the organisation you are working for operates. Each organisation has its own way of doing things, some of which are explicit others less so, and you will find them out as you progress. Researching the organisation, its management structure, its vision or objectives and principles can be undertaken before you enter the workplace. Knowledge of legislative, policy and economic influences is also key to understanding how an organisation might work along with any local factors such as community demographics or resource/staffing issues. As a social worker you need to be responsive to changes, challenges and opportunities and working within a personalisation context is likely to offer you many experiences of this. As discussed above the level of engagement with the personalisation agenda will vary from agency to agency. You may join a team who are have embedded this approach, providing you with, knowledge, skills and experience for you to draw upon. On the other hand you may join an organisation with less experience and/or may be less receptive to the concept of personalisation. This can feel like a lonely place and I have spoken to many students who report this experience. On the one hand you need to demonstrate that you can be a co-operative team member but on the other-hand you may be frustrated or disillusioned by the lack of appetite for personalisation. It is important that you work sensitively in this situation and try to find potential allies or opportunities to share knowledge and good practice ideas. Contributing to organisations by helping them shape future practice and direction is a challenging task and one that you will continue |

Engage with, inform, and adapt to changing contexts that shape practice. Operate effectively within your own organisational frameworks and contribute to the development of services and organisations. Operate effectively within multi-agency and inter-professional settings.
to develop throughout your career but providing some level of professional leadership through the exchange of knowledge and information can be achieved even on your first placement.

Within a personalisation context, it is likely that you will be required to work with many professionals and agencies. Adopting a person centred approach and ensuring that decisions and discussions take place with the individual and shared with all relevant parties in a co-ordinated fashion is key to the self-directed model. It is important to acknowledge and avoid some of the ways in which service users can be made to feel like they are passive recipients of care:

- Meetings happening without them
- Meeting having to be repeated due to professionals unable to co-ordinate diaries
- Meetings with too many professionals with too much to say
- Unnecessary meetings being held with no purpose
- Information or decisions being presented at meetings with no prior warning
- Inadequate or no advocacy service provided or offered to service user

| 9. Professional Leadership | There are real opportunities to offer professional leadership even as a student social worker within the personalisation context. As the 2013 Community Care Survey on Personalisation suggested many social workers in practice still feel they have not been trained adequately on personalisation. As a student you may be able to share information from your own training at team meetings for example or on a one to one basis. Many of the social workers in practice will have trained before changes in the law and policy relating to personalisation took place. Whilst they will need to keep up to date with changes, they may not have had the time or space to consider these changes in any real detail. Students can often play a vital role in contributing to supporting learning and development, particularly in new or emerging areas of practice such as personalisation. It is important however to understand why a team may be less knowledgeable or receptive to the idea of personalisation. It may be that training has just not been offered but it could be that social workers feel quite suspicious about the move towards personalisation. It is important that you talk to the manager, your supervisor and the team before you engage in supporting learning and development to make sure you approach it positively and sensitively, acknowledging the genuine concerns |

| Take responsibility for the professional learning and development of others through supervision, mentoring, assessing, research, teaching, leadership and management. | There are real opportunities to offer professional leadership even as a student social worker within the personalisation context. As the 2013 Community Care Survey on Personalisation suggested many social workers in practice still feel they have not been trained adequately on personalisation. As a student you may be able to share information from your own training at team meetings for example or on a one to one basis. Many of the social workers in practice will have trained before changes in the law and policy relating to personalisation took place. Whilst they will need to keep up to date with changes, they may not have had the time or space to consider these changes in any real detail. Students can often play a vital role in contributing to supporting learning and development, particularly in new or emerging areas of practice such as personalisation. It is important however to understand why a team may be less knowledgeable or receptive to the idea of personalisation. It may be that training has just not been offered but it could be that social workers feel quite suspicious about the move towards personalisation. It is important that you talk to the manager, your supervisor and the team before you engage in supporting learning and development to make sure you approach it positively and sensitively, acknowledging the genuine concerns |
practitioners have.

You may also be able to demonstrate professional leadership through developing awareness of personalisation with service users and their families. This could involve providing information, engaging with group discussions or presentations or creating opportunities for service users/carers to exchange their own experiences. You could also engage the wider community and other agencies in this role and consider ways of providing information about personalisation which may lead to the development of new service providers or general awareness around the changing contexts within which social care is being delivered. Networking with local agencies including user led organisations and promoting the exchange of knowledge and ideas can be one of the most effective ways of moving forward in relation to the personalisation agenda.