A child and family centred approach

In Bury, we focus on making sure that children and their families are at the centre of everything we do. This way of working is called a 'child and family centred' approach. It aims to help you develop, achieve your goals, feel good about yourself, and have more say in planning and making decisions. An example of a goal could be, want you want to achieve when you grow up, such as getting a job or living on their own.

We also want to help your parents and carers by making sure they understand your development, giving them more influence in planning and decision-making, and helping them feel more confident and in control.

We also want everyone to understand that:

- If you have special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), you do well when you have support from your family and community. Your well-being depends on how well your family is coping.
- The local authority works with families of children or young people with SEND to make their lives better. This includes making sure their needs are met and that they are kept safe.

Your parents and carers should be fully involved in decisions that are made. The knowledge they have about you must be listened to and respected when making these decisions. Your views will also be respected and listened to, based on your age, maturity and capability.

If you feel this is not happening, talk to your education or training provider about your concerns. If you still have concerns that your Education, Health and Care Plan does not reflect your wishes, please contact the EHC Assessment and Review Team on 0161 253 5969.

Person/Family Centred Planning and Planning Tools

Person-centred thinking tools

Person-centred thinking tools are a set of easy-to-use templates that are used to give structure to conversations. Using them is a practical way to capture information that feeds into care and support planning, as well as to improve understanding, communication and relationships.

Below we have a range of tools taken from the Helen Sandersons Associates page about person centred thinking tools.

4 plus 1 questions	Perfect week	Good day/Bad day	Sorting important to/for
What's working/Not working	The doughnut	Relationship circle	Presence to contribution
Matching support	Learning log	Decision marking profile	Decision making agreement
Communication chart			

4 plus 1 Questions

The '4 plus 1 questions' person-centred thinking tool is powerful when used in meetings or reviews, or to look at a particular aspect of someone's life.

It focuses discussion on four main questions: What have you tried? What have you learned? What are you pleased about? What are you concerned about? The answers to these questions lead to the 'plus 1' question – based on what we know, what should we do next?

What it does

It can help people to think about a particular challenge or situation and plan for change. Because the 4 plus 1 questions are answered by more than one person, it groups together learning from different perspectives.

How it helps?

It can be used to update a one-page profile, or to review a project or plan. It is a quick way to work out better ways of supporting people or working together.

Use it now

You can download a PDF of the '4 plus 1 questions' tool here to see how it looks, or start using one today with this free template.

Perfect week

A perfect week describes a person's ideal week, which is both practical and possible within resources (e.g. Individual Service Fund or budget).

It is a detailed description of how a person wants to live, not an unrealistic dream. It includes the important places, interests and people that matter to a person.

What it does

The perfect week can become the basis of a personalised rota, and you can use the matching support process to think with the person about who they want to support them for each element of their perfect week.

How it helps

Using the perfect week tool helps people to think about what they would like their life to look like, and can form the basis of an effective person-centred plan.

Use it now

You can download a perfect week template here.

Good day/Bad day

This person-centred thinking tool helps you to have conversations about what a good day is like, from when a person wakes up to when they go to bed.

You can then look at the same detailed information for a bad day. This helps us to learn what is important to the person – both what must be present in their day and what must not happen.

What it does

It is a way to learn about what matters to someone and what support they need to have good days and avoid bad days. We need this information about everyone who receives support, and colleagues as well. This is a way to start or add to one-page profiles for colleagues and for those supported, and to decide together on actions. To help the person to have more good days and less bad days, what needs to happen? This is recorded in the action plan.

How it helps

It helps to understand what matters to the person and what needs to happen for them to have more good days and fewer bad days.

Use it now

You can download a PDF of the Good Day/Bad Day tool here to see how it looks, or start using one today with this free template.

Sorting important to/for

The fundamental person-centred thinking skill is to separate what is important to someone from what is important for them, and to find a balance between the two. We then summarise this information on a one-page profile.

Historically, services have just focused on what is important for them, to keep people healthy and safe. Working in a person-centred way requires that we see the person first – what matters to them, not just what the matter is with them. We need to learn both what is important to the person and what is important for them, and find the balance that works for them. This is then recorded on a one-page profile.

Use it now

You can download a PDF of the 'Sorting Important To/For' tool here to see how it looks, or start using one today with this free template.

What's working/Not working

To develop outcomes and actions, we must first work out what it is about someone's current situation that they are happy with, and what they would change if they could - looking at things both from their perspective and from others' perspectives.

This person-centred thinking tool works through this and starts to develop outcomes and actions to make sure the change happens.

What it does

It sorts what is working and what is not working from different perspectives to identify a way forward.

How it helps

As a really simple way of analysing what is happening in someone's life from more than one perspective, it can help to identify whether what is important to them is present in their life, and whether they are being supported in a way that makes sense to them.

Problems surface where there are areas of disagreement in people's lives. By looking at what is working and not working from different perspectives, it is clear where there is agreement and where there is difference.

Finding what is working and not working from different perspectives is a key part of a person-centred review.

Use it now

You can download a PDF of a 'What's Working/Not Working' tool here to see how it looks, or start using one today with this free template.

The doughnut

Developed by Charles Handy, the doughnut is a way to help people to think about what is central or core to their role, where they can be creative and use their judgement, and what is outside of their responsibility.

What it does

It is a way to think about and identify specific roles and responsibilities of people in a particular situation, so that people know what has to be done a particular way and where they can experiment and be creative. It also identifies what is not part of someone's role.

How it helps

It can help to clarify the roles of the different professionals and agencies involved in supporting someone. This can feed into care and support planning, and can be used to sort roles and expectations in a team plan.

Use it now

You can download a PDF of a Doughnut here to see how it looks, or start using one today with this free template.

Relationship circle

What is important to you will almost always include who is important to you. We can learn about and record the important people in someone's life by having conversations and using the relationship circle.

What it does

It captures who a person knows, how they know them, who else in their circle knows them and how these networks and relationships can help a person to live the life they choose.

How it helps?

It is a way of identifying who is important to a person, and to explore any important issues around those relationships. It feeds into support planning because it highlights those people who should be involved in planning, and helps to discover which relationships can be strengthened or supported.

Use it now

You can download a PDF of a relationship circle here to see how it looks, or start using one today with this free template.

Presence to contribution

This is a way of having a conversation with someone you support, or working together with a team, to find ways to enable the person to be part of their community.

It enables you to record what the person is interested in (or take this from their one-page profile), what it means to be present for an activity and what they could do to contribute to it more fully.

What it does

It asks people to think about the places that are important to them, where they go now and how they can develop these interests further. This helps us to think about possibilities in the future and plan actions to make positive change, supporting someone to be a contributing member of their community.

How it helps

It provides a structure to think about what a person does on a day-to-day basis, so that we can see opportunities for them to make new connections, meet new people and contribute to the community.

Use it now

You can download a PDF of the Presence to Contribution tool here to see how it looks, or start using one today with this free template.

Matching support

Getting a good match between the person supporting and the person being supported - whether paid or unpaid - is crucial. The matching support tool is a simple way to record what is needed to create the best match.

What it does

It gives a structure to look at which skills and support and which people and characteristics match well together. The matching support tool has four columns. The first is the support that the person wants and needs. The next is the skills required to support them, followed by personality characteristics and finally shared common interests. The most important part of this is personality characteristics.

How it helps

It helps you to think about the paid support that people want and need, to use either in matching to existing staff or for the person specification for recruiting staff or volunteers.

Use it now

You can download a PDF of a Matching Support tool here to see how it looks, or start using one today with this free template.

Learning log

We never stop learning about the people that we support.

Notes and files that we keep often record what is happening day-to-day, but not what we have learned. When supporting others, it is important to capture any learning as it happens, because this can be used to inform planning and shape the support you give.

What it does?

It gives you a process to help you to record what you are learning whilst supporting someone. It is most useful when people are trying out new activities or are being supported by a new staff member. By capturing this information and reviewing it, the whole team can keep learning how to give the best support.

How it helps

Crucially, learning logs ensure that in-depth knowledge and understanding of a person is shared with the wider team so that they too can support them well. They should be reviewed regularly by team leaders and shared with the people involved in the support.

Use it now

You can download a PDF of a Learning Log here to see how it looks, or start using one today with this underline free template.

Decision making profile

The decision-making profile creates a clear picture about how a person makes a decision and how they want to be supported in decision-making. It can be used alongside the decision-making agreement to help people to have choice and control in their lives.

It describes how to provide information in a way that makes sense to that person, this could be how they want you to structure your language, if they want written words, symbols or pictures or perhaps an audio format.

It breaks the decision-making process into 5 sections:

- How I like to get information

- How to present choices to me

- Ways you can help me understand

- When is the best time for me to make decisions?

- When is a bad time for me to make a decision?

When you are completing a decision-making profile with a person look at their one-page profile and communication chart. See what these tell you about the best times and ways to support the person to make a decision. Talk to the person and those they know well to check this information with them and add to it. It might help to think about a decision the person has had to make in the past and then think about what worked and what did not work for them about how they were supported.

How it helps

Together, these sections help us to support a person to understand choices that are available to them and make informed decisions. This is invaluable when thinking about consent and capacity.

Use it now

Download a decision making profile template to give it a go.

Decision making agreement

Making decisions is part of being in control of your own life. The decision-making agreement looks at specific situations that are important to a person, and sets out the decision-making process relating to each one.

Here are some important questions to ask yourself:

- Do I fully understand what is important to the person and their communication?

- Am I the best person to support this decision-making?

- Is the information that I have and am giving the person relevant to the decision?

- Am I presenting it in a way that the person can understand?

- I am giving the information in the right place and time?

- Have I given the person the best chance to make the decision themselves?

What it does

It breaks down information into three easy sections: 'important decisions in my life', 'how I must be involved' and 'who make the final decision'. This then helps us to reflect on how decisions are made and who is making them.

How it helps

It helps us to think about how much choice and control a person has in their life and, if the balance is wrong, to make positive changes.

Use it now

You can download a PDF of the Decision Making Agreement tool here to see how it looks, or start using one today with this free template.

Communication chart

This is an essential tool to use when people don't communicate with words.

It is also important to use when the ways that people communicate with their behaviour are clearer than the words that they use, or when what people say and what they mean are different. In our experience, most people could benefit from a communication chart.

What it does

It helps us to focus on what someone is trying to communicate, whether they use words or not. It is easy to assume that someone doesn't have much to say if they rarely speak, but it isn't the case. This person-centred thinking tool helps us to find other ways of communicating well together.

How it helps

It ensures that people are understood. This is so important, especially for people who rely on others for support. Having the power to communicate and be understood is central to people having choice and control in their life.

Use it now

You can download a PDF of a Communication Chart here to see how it looks, or start using one today with this free template.