

Adult Social Care

Commissioning – the Role for Micro Enterprises in Perth & Kinross

Perth and Kinross Council

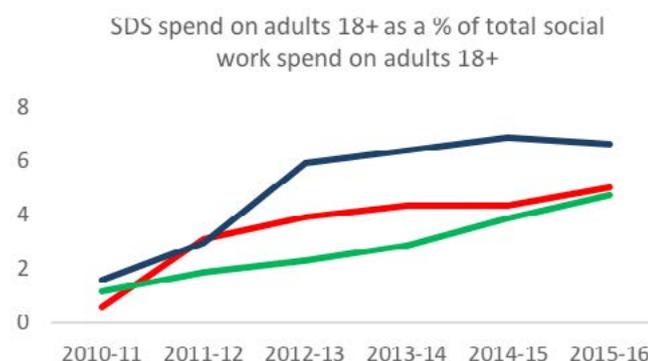
Contact for Enquiries

Donna Murray-Trail
hello@thecareandwellbeing.coop

In 2014 a group of individuals who lived and worked in highland Perthshire received a small grant from Perth & Kinross Council to establish an organisation to stimulate microenterprise and care and support in rural areas. The aim was to increase the uptake of self-directed support which had been low due to lack of options and choices available. With the support of GrowBiz, the Care and Wellbeing Co-op was established and now involve 27 local micro enterprises that provide a range of care and support including befriending, independent living solutions for older people, welfare and benefits advice and movement psychotherapy.

Background

The ways in which care and support are provided are changing. There is an increasing emphasis on individuals choosing and arranging their own care, whether this is through self-directed support payments or other systems. At the same time, as there is an increasing older population in rural areas where supply is limited.



The Care and Wellbeing Co-op grew out of GrowBiz, a support network of trained mentors with a particular interest in small businesses. Growbiz offer one-to one meetings, peer support, training, resources and mentoring to self-employed in rural areas and offered the support required to establish the Care and Wellbeing Co-op in 2014.

Key Activities

- The Care and Wellbeing Co-op is about working together to provide friendly, local and individualised services designed to improve quality of life.

- The Co-op membership is open to anyone however members are asked to provide an overview of the support that they can provide to co-op and what they expect back in terms of support to make sure they adhere to the values of the co-op.
- The Co-op has one paid member who works 15 hours a week to develop and look at different ways community enterprise can support adult social care.
- The Co-op provides training and wellbeing for both members of the co-operative and private providers.

Pilot projects

Social prescription project

- Members of the Co-op worked in partnership with GP's in the local area.
- The co-op asked for the opportunity to work 10 patients over 3 months who would often visit the GP for company.
- • As a result of the project the GP's saw a decrease in visits by the patients who also reported increased wellbeing and increased uptake of self-directed care and support.

Family sitter services

- A tester project set up with a £1000 participatory budget grant to provide a sitter service for families in rural areas with a child with disabilities.
- Traditionally parents would have to travel 2 hours to Perth for a sitter service. Since members of the co-op live locally they are now able to come to the families' homes.
- To make the visit more enjoyable for the child, the co-op carers bring a child from the school to the visit. This gives the child an opportunity to interact with someone of their own age while a professional is at hand in the background. The school children involved have also enjoyed the work so much that they started a youth club.

Benefits and Impact

- The Co-op now has 27 members including self-employed carers.
- There has been an increase in the uptake of direct payments and the customers have been satisfied with the quick responsiveness of the co-op compared to a large provider.
- Because carers are living in the area it also means that they are spending their money in the local community.
- In addition to a local, responsive and customer centered approach, the co-operative also offer better value for money. The co-operative can offer 2 hours of care through self-directed support in a rural area for £30 while a private agency charge

the council £160 because of the rural location.

- Importantly, the co-operative is not only providing care but bringing together care and wellbeing by connecting with the community.

Learning

The Co-operative have experience challenges in terms of current frameworks, regulation and legislation. The care is currently not regulated and depending on how risk averse the client is this may pose as a challenge. There is further a challenge regarding how members can maintain a professional qualification over time.