

Hi folks, having read the rest of the comments, several things come to the fore in blinding headlines

1 You suggest that people may be happier not being assessed and accessing services outside of the council, yet, if you need to know someone's needs in the first place, you need to assess them, or you are really only working on that person's view of what they want. At the moment, if a person can be persuaded to be assessed, a completely new way of dealing with their problems can be identified. This is one of the great strengths of assessment, as it helps to have a person involved who is not close to the problem sometimes.

2. Cart before the horse. This could only work if the services you suggest can be made available outside, are set up in tandem with the Council's existing services, and let the punter choose. You may be right, and you can drift away and let the voluntary sector do some stuff. However, I feel its using people as test subjects to do things the way around you are proposing. People deserve better treatment than this.

3. The vexed question of existing users. It seems to me that you cannot, in the on term run a two tier service. And I understand to do so in any way except transitionally, is in fact not legal. Thus, you would be forcing people with existing services to go outside for their service in future, which for many would not be easy to do, which will then probably raise their status into one of the top two groups anyway. I propose that is this in fact which has led to other boroughs lack of savings, not as you imply, in social workers merely doing it to be nice to people.

Lastly, I think the best approach is to explore the services outside organisations might be able to provide and test them on volunteers. Then if you find its working you can change. However, it has to be said that as you yourselves say, the categories are in many ways subjective, and decisions are made now as to which category to place people in, IE categories are already on assessments, so you should and maybe are, already doing the sorting to some extent. Does it really need a change, or are you in fact doing what you are talking about already?

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