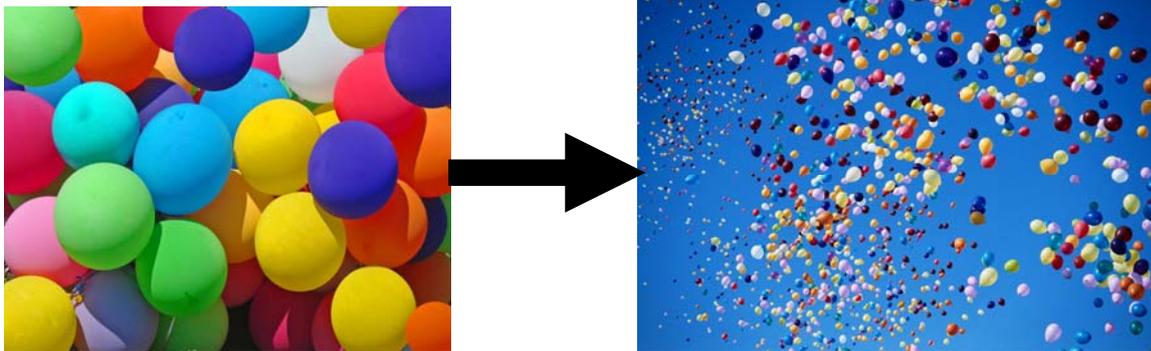




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# “Moving from Contemplation to Implementation”



**Presentation at NFVB  
Immersion Event,  
Monday, 22/04/2013**

*Brendan Broderick, CEO*

**Speaking notes for address to National Federation of Voluntary Bodies Immersion  
Plenary Session on Monday 22/04/2013, Brendan Broderick.**

**PART 1**

In this presentation, I will report on the work of our Person-Centered Wing over the past three years.

At the outset, I would like to acknowledge the clear-eyed, resolute, and resilient leadership of Josephine Glackin who, in addition to carrying the role of Regional Director for our services in Meath and Westmeath, directs the wing.

I would also like to credit the creativity, courage, and long-haul commitment of the five coordinators who have been with us from the outset: Lavinia Donoher, Caroline Bracken, Paula Jayne Geraghty, Sean Bohan, and Colm Conroy.

The three years of intensive work which effectively began in early 2010 was preceded by five years of sustained consciousness raising of how we might do better. It gives me particular pleasure to be sharing this platform today with Michael Kendrick who led and guided us through this seminal period of losing the faith in old ways of doing things. Michael hacked off much of the ivy that was choking the capacity for new growth and loosened and undermined many of our most tenacious and deeply rooted assumptions. He established an awareness of *the new obvious*.

Before launching into the story of the Person-Centered Wing, I want to draw a distinction between this kind of work and single-person versions of more conventional ways of working. Our Person-Centered Wing is currently working with 29 individuals. Separate from this we

are supporting 13 single-person arrangements in other parts of the service. These single-person arrangements are, we believe, adding very significant value to the lives of these individuals – and also, and perhaps even more particularly, to the lives of the individuals who had previously lived with them. However, the levels of ambition and intentionality about vigorously promoting self-direction fused with a strong drive to inclusion, *all embedded within a consciousness of the need to develop valued social roles*, is peculiar to the work of the Person-Centered Wing.

I would now like to give you a sense of the scale and scope of the work achieved to date, the kind of people we have been working with, and some comparison of the costs between doing it this way and the more conventional group-based approach.

I do believe that this approach is feasible for anybody and everybody. However, my focus today is on presenting the work we have done over these past three years and how we have gone about it. I will not be dealing with its scalability potential, but am happy to participate in such discussions later.

Following this introduction of our work, Marie Beades and Sean Bohan will give an outline of what this work has meant in practice for Marie and some outline of how we have gone about it.

After their presentation, I will summarise both the key learning and key aspects of our approach to implementing this work.

Of the 29 individuals, 17 are male and 12 are female.

There are two teenagers, 6 in their 20s, 12 in their 30s, 2 in their 40s, 6 in their 50s, and 1 in her 60s.

Three, perhaps four, of the 29 people would fit the descriptor of “historically misplaced: somebody with a mild disability who should never have ended up with their lives being colonised by disability services.”

9 of the 29 correspond to the descriptor “very significant challenging behaviour.”

4 of the 9, if one had a mind to subject them to standardised psychometric assessment, would register within the severe range of intellectual disability.

From a planning perspective, what was required by way of response from us was fairly *straightforward* in respect of 8 individuals. This did not mean that the supports were easy to put in place but rather that what needed to be put in place was fairly obvious from an early stage.

The planning and design of support for seven others involved some elements of complexity.

14 of the 29 impressed as being either “generally complex” or “highly complex” in terms of developing a fit-for-purpose working vision, and designing the necessary supports.

While the initial people we chose to work with were on the not-so-difficult end of the spectrum (following the guidance of Hope Leet Dittmeier – in one’s early apprenticeship, one should not overreach in terms of challenge –), over the past twelve months we are engaging with people at the other end of the spectrum. In fact, on Wednesday, April 10<sup>th</sup> we pressed the “push” button on our most ambitious undertaking to date when we supported a woman in her late 30s with very, very significant needs to move from a residential unit in one of our two remaining congregate care settings to a customised cottage in her home town to her overcome-with-delight parents, and all with very strong neighbourhood and community support (show film clip, if available).

I would also like to address the issue of costing. As a member of the Value for Money Group, I encountered much frustration in promoting the view that, *competently executed*, this was a significantly more cost-effective way of working with people. The prevailing fear was that it would cost more than the current unsustainable level of costs. Arguments that “it could not possibly cost more” were not persuasive.

I trust that the information set out here provides some validation of these views.

As every service provider knows, the heavy costs are absorbed in providing residential services – the sharp end of the implementation challenge is also around developing residential supports.

For the purposes of this presentation, I have concentrated on the costs incurred by 11 of the 17 individuals whom we support residentially / 24 x 7. We are presenting the costs in relation to these 11 as these are the ones for whom we have a sufficient information base to determine an annualised costing.

As you will see, 2 of the 11 cost more – 1 costs 27% more, another 5% more. However, 9 of the 11 cost less.

As you can see on the table the cost savings are significant, from a low of 20% to a high of 65%. The costing methodology adopted is outlined in the pack.

Just as important as the potential for very significant cost savings is the fact that the cost profile associated with the Person-Centered Wing is dynamic. A frequently seen pattern is that of peak costs being incurred during the early installation phases, followed by phases of declining cost. Overall, **the flow in cost fluctuation within the Person-Centered Wing tends towards a declining pattern of expenditure.** In contrast, costs associated with more conventional group-based arrangements tend to be very stable, indeed fixed.

In terms of the actual mechanics of funding, we have generally not relied on the disentangling of funding linked to individual service consumers from the group setting in which they had been previously supported. As the *Value for Money* Report has clearly identified, current funding systems depend to a massive extent on patterns of **cross-subsidisation**. Had we sought to disentangle the money actually or notionally associated with certain individuals

supported by the Person-Centered Wing, this would have caused many of the group arrangement from which they had been extricated to collapse. Our funding of the work of the Person-Centered Wing thus far has relied more heavily on generating efficiencies across the organisation and using this efficiency-generated funding to finance the work. It is ironic that in certain respects block funding allows us some scope which we would otherwise not have had to promote this work.

Just before introducing Marie Beades and Sean Bohan, a brief word about how the Person-Centered Wing goes about its work. The key architect and conductor of the support arrangements is the person we refer to as the co-ordinator. The co-ordinator is the person who initially invests very significant amounts of time in getting to know the person through a *discovery process*. This process regularly takes a number of months before there is sufficient clarity about the direction in which the service consumer wants to take his or her life.

Keeping faith with the process is necessary to enable all involved to cope with the phases of disorientation, impasse, dead-end which feature strongly during this phase. The discovery phase is very different to more traditional *first assess fully, then intervene* approaches. It involves much exploration, much trying things on for size – there is no sense of needing to know everything or even to know a critical minimum before moving into some kind of action. Everything is focused on paying attention to the person and to what we are learning about him or her as we introduce them to new settings, new situations, new vistas of possibility.

Spending time with the person in routine, familiar settings doing routine, familiar things is highly unlikely to bear much fruit by way of discovery. Likewise, it has been our experience that the official reports and files maintained in services often contain minimal, if any, creative seeds for informing the process.

Once we have an initial fix on where the person wants to take their lives and the kind of support arrangements that will be needed to sustain this, we then move into recruiting direct support workers to assist the service consumer convert their aspiration and life vision into not just an immediate lifestyle but a life trajectory, a going-somewhere life. This recruitment is totally focused on the fit between the focal person and the direct support worker. The values, motivation, temperament / way of being in the world, life experience, and personal resourcefulness of the support worker is what matters. Some focal persons want buzzy, active, big-splash people to support them. Others like low key contemplatives. Getting the right fit between focal person and support person is essential. Taking one's steer from the focal person is critical.

I would now like to introduce Marie Beades, Sylvia Joy-Gavin, her support worker, and Sean Bohan her co-ordinator.

## **PART 2**

We made a couple of false starts at implementation before launching our Person-Centered Wing. First, we tried to piggy-back implementation for 12 people on what was in fact a training-learning experience. We operated on the naïve assumption that if we grafted on a scaffolding of support around these 12 individuals (monthly meetings of key worker, local team, local and senior management) that we would secure sufficient focus and momentum to do something meaningful. After much initial enthusiasm, this foundered after 4-5 months.

Our next venture was to ask somebody to lead out on this, to make things happen for these 12 people. This involved working collaboratively with and across key workers and support teams to ensure that there was an effective action plan in place and that we were delivering on commitments. The fatal flaw was that we were trying to deliver a person-centered approach with people who continued to be embedded within conventional group-based programmes. Again, after some initial optimism, this approach ran into the sands.

At this point the regional directors, of whom we had three, came forward with a recommendation that an initiative to faithfully honour the precepts of person-centered practice could only work if it was spun off from mothership and given its own dedicated standalone space and resource. They also recommended that the initiative be led by one of them and that this should be their sole dedicated role. The decision to mandate a senior executive to this initiative has been pivotal in whatever success we have achieved to date.

Recognising that clarity was essential we developed three brief notes – 4 A-4 pages in total – on *Key Tasks, Expectations, Key Jeopardies to be Avoided*. (These are on our website.)

Next action was to carefully recruit a cadre of high-calibre internal champions, people who had a passion to take on this kind of work, and who impressed as having the necessary seriousness of intent, resilience, and steady nerves. This is the group of co-ordinators whom I have referred to already.

We then went about an intensive period of formation and support of this group using two external consultants: Hope Leet Dittimier, whom we had been introduced to by Michael Kendrick, and who had impressed us with her infinitely-layered implementation nous. We had also been working with Brian McGeough across a range of middle and senior managers within the organisation during the previous year. Brian had impressed with his capacity to establish a single-minded and wholehearted focus on the needs of the service user and the imperative not to trim on aspirations and expectations.

The co-ordinators began engaging with the initial group of service consumers at the same time, learning to apply the discovery methodology.

During the initial 18 months of implementation, with the help of some capacity-building funding from *Genio*, we had the benefit of quarterly week-long implementation mentoring from Hope. This involved detailed, in-depth probing and inquiry by Hope as to what had been tried with the focal persons, what issues were emerging. Those of you who have worked with Hope will be familiar with her 14-15 hour days and her relentless and rigorous

scrutiny to ensure that the commitment to self-direction, inclusion, and the promotion of socially valued roles is optimised. This scrupulous micro-mentoring has been the yeast in the dough.

It was only after the co-ordinators had established an initial fix on what was required to enable the service consumer to take their life where they wanted it to go – or at least insofar as we could figure out, intuit where they wanted to take it – that we began engaging the direct support workers. We currently have 70 number of direct support workers on our books. Our initial assumption was that each direct support worker would be exclusively assigned to a particular service user. We have found however that such is the quality of support workers that many have a contribution to make to more than one focal person.

Direct support workers work short shifts, three or four hours. There is a level of specialisation of role within the support workers. The support worker who is best suited to supporting somebody to join a hiking party in the Slieve Blooms is unlikely to be the support person introducing the person to the local beautician.

We made a very conscious decision to recruit our direct support workers *outside* of the pool of people who had been socialised, formed and normed within our conventional services.

It might be worth nothing at this point that we never at any stage invested any time in discussions on “the management of change.” Nor did we invest any time in thinking about how we needed to review our various systems (our HR systems, our finance systems) to align them with this work. We operated on the very simple, perhaps naïve, belief that once we

knew what we wanted to put in place for individuals that we would just set about doing that and if we found we were impeded by some systems issue, as opposed to a slackening of our own determination and resolve, that we would conduct the necessary running repairs. By and large this has not been an issue. (In recent years I have occasionally heard agencies talk about the need to refashion their systems *before* hitting live implementation. My sense is that this is probably an unnecessary action loop – indeed, it could be a way of substituting activity for action.)

When we hit the implementation trail, we did this in as low profile a way as possible. We did not talk about it much in our ordinary services. We did not broadcast our intentions publicly. We sought to keep it as off radar as possible – to avoid having to deal with opposition and resistance and the pressure of quick delivery of achievement. We removed all pressure from co-ordinators to, in advance, milestone their progress – there was no talk of where they needed to be at 2 months, at 4 months, even at 6 months. We had in our “Expectations” note said we would be disappointed if by 2 years we had not got significant activity under sail for 15-20 people, but we never sought to prescriptively map or operationalise progress. We trusted in the sincerity, resolve, and passion of the team and recognised that periods of disorientation, cul-de-sac, and creative confusion were likely to be hallmarks. This allowed people the time to engage in the painstaking work of discovery which lies at the heart of this work.

In addition to taking the pressures off team members, we also went out of our way to honour the precept of *Lao Tzu* “Give up contention.” We made no line in the sand declarations. When some families and staff members got nervous fearing that we were going to impose

this way of working on everybody, we were quick to acknowledge that “this may not be for everybody.” (Candidly, this was more a ploy for sidestepping and deflecting argument and protest than a view we genuinely held.)

*Major learning for us*

1. Good preparation is essential. A working plan is necessary – but the working plan is something you work *off*. Don’t get hooked on making the perfect plan. Beware of laminated documents. It’s a live thing. Don’t rely too much on the plan. Plans will fall apart. Principles, shared resolve, and an appropriate sense of urgency are the touchstone;
2. Fundamentally this kind of work involves breaking out from the closed circuits of serviceland. It’s about getting into the traffic of life, the space where opportunities emerge spontaneously, serendipitously, the zone where *one thing leads to another*.

Recognising and exploiting such opportunity is an essential capacity that needs to be nurtured. For us this has often involved learning to *get out of the way*;

3. In the real world things come together and things fall apart. Miscarried plans and opportunities are inevitable. The capacity to learn from such setbacks is a key determinant of future success.

4. The plans and “solutions” which we collaboratively develop have a shelf-life. The focus is on this chapter, this season, in the person’s life. There will be loose ends. Constant vigilance is required. Things will need fixing. We are much more **on the spot** when doing this kind of work than we are in our *serviceland* practices. This quality of being on the spot lies at the core of whatever value and quality this work delivers. When things fall apart, there is immediate and high exposure. The imperative to address the issue is inescapable. By contrast, a person’s life can be falling apart for decades in conventional services without this creating any sense of crisis for those in charge;

5. Working with family is as important as working with the focal person. A style of advocacy which pits the interests of the focal person in confrontation with those of family is deeply unhelpful.

Frontloading a focus on how we are going to safeguard the safety of the focal person really helps build family confidence and trust. Safety first, but *not safety only* is one of our main motifs;

6. Have faith in the community around you. Work at getting more comfortable asking. We have underestimated ordinary peoples’ capacity and appetite for supporting others.

Once the work began to take off, there was much sensitivity in the more conventional parts of the service that only this kind of work was valued by senior management. Comments began emerging about people feeling unappreciated, unvalued, unrecognised for all they had done over the years. We have sought to address this issue by pointing out that a wide range of initiatives can add value to a service user's life and that all such initiatives should be acknowledged and celebrated. However, we have also sought to ensure that our evaluation of work reflects discernment and honesty. While each well-intentioned initiative deserves acknowledgement and credit, they are not each necessarily of equal value. One approach we have relied on to capture this balance is a simple framework, the **Horizon Menu**.

The opening bars of music were from Sonny Rollins' *Blue Seven* to reflect that this kind of work has more affinity with jazz than working off a classical music score where everybody has their exact part carefully scripted. This work involves skilled, competent improvisation – certainly each person involved has to be very familiar with the key melody and supporting motifs but ultimately *where they manage to take it* depends crucially on their capacity for creativity, courage, and sympathetic understanding.

**Signed:**

**Brendan Broderick**  
CEO

**Cost comparison of Person-Centered Wing and Traditional Group-based supports  
Monday, 15/04/2013**

*Methodology*

The Person-centred Wing (PCW) figure quoted reflects current expenditure (annual) for the individual in respect of the full employment costs of direct support **and** the full employment costs associated with the co-ordinator role.

The comparator figure reflects the \*ascribed costs associated with supporting an equivalent individual on a 24 x 7 basis via a combination of community group home and access to a conventional day service.

**N.B.1** Costs associated with the more conventional group-based arrangements tend to be very stable, indeed fixed. The cost profile associated with the person-centred wing is more dynamic. A profile of costs spiking during early-installation phase followed by phases of declining cost is frequently seen in the PCW.

Overall, the flow in cost fluctuation within the person-centred wing tends towards a declining pattern of expenditure.

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\* The actual cost quoted is based on calculating the mid-point of an ascribed cost range (working from the historic convention of an average funding of €80,000 for 7-day residential and €20,000 for day service and deducting 15% to reflect the funding retrenchments of the past four years). The ascribed cost range reflects the costs we have historically incurred in supporting such individuals.

The following comparators are based on the eleven individuals currently being supported on a 24 x 7 basis for whom we have sufficient information to determine an annualised costing.

Candidate 1: €9,000 versus an estimated group comparator of €80,800;  
73% of conventional cost, saving of 27%;

Candidate 2: €9,127 versus an estimated group comparator of €33,750;  
45% of conventional cost, saving of 55%;

Candidate 3: €8,000 versus an estimated group comparator of €19,000;  
57% of conventional cost, saving of 43%

Candidate 4: €30,000 versus an estimated group comparator of €102,000;  
127% of conventional cost, extra cost of 27%

Candidate 5: €6,000 versus an estimated group comparator of €74,400;  
62% of conventional cost, saving of 38%;

Candidate 6: €44,000 versus an estimated group comparator of €191,000;  
75% of conventional cost, saving of 25%;

Candidate 7: €5,537 versus an estimated group comparator of €78,600;  
58% of conventional cost, saving of 42%;

Candidate 8: €76,000 versus an estimated group comparator of €72,250;  
105% of conventional cost, extra cost of 5%;

Candidate 9: €1,182 versus estimated group comparator of €9,250;  
35% of conventional cost, saving of 65%;

Candidate 10: €19,000 versus an estimated group comparator of €25,500;  
75% of conventional cost, saving of 25%;

Candidate 11: €7,341 versus an estimated group comparator of €34,000;  
80% of conventional cost, saving of 20%.

## **KEY TASKS OF PERSON-CENTRED WING, MONDAY, 15/06/2009**

1. Inquire/explore/negotiate with families **a vision of a good, full, and inclusive life**, a vision with an appropriate sense of possibility and an appropriate scale of ambition;
2. Work collaboratively with service users and families to develop a robust set of **personalised safeguards**, taking a lead from service users and their families as to the major safety issues and risk factors;
3. Build up a picture of current and potential family, neighbourhood, and community sources of **“natural” support**;
4. In collaboration with the family, design and **install** (in a timely manner) **initial arrangements** that address the immediate needs of the service user and family without falling back on traditional centre-based or group-based arrangements – and in a manner which will act as a robust platform for developing follow-on arrangements to faithfully promote the person-centred vision;
5. Work **progressively** to ensure that the evolving arrangements **incorporate** each of the core **elements of the agreed vision**;
6. **Maintain** a level of **close contact** with the service user and family to
  - a) ensure the continuing currency and relevance of the arrangements
  - b) identify necessary adaptations and “running repairs”
  - c) continue deepening awareness and learning of the unique individual differences of the service user;
7. Routinely and **proactively evaluate**
  - a) The adequacy of the current arrangements;
  - b) The pace and momentum with which the work is progressively addressing the realisation of all elements of the vision.

## **EXPECTATIONS OF THE PERSON-CENTRED WING, TUESDAY, 02/06/2009**

- These expectations are being set out to facilitate those with an interest in leading the wing as to the scale of associated performance expectations.

### *Expectations*

1. To develop and sustain **15-20 exemplars** of person-centred practice within the catchment area of South Kildare, Laois, Offaly, Westmeath and Meath over the next two years.

It is not necessarily anticipated that these exemplars will be fully realised versions of person-centred practice. However, the character of the arrangement will be clearly person-centred – will demonstrate high fidelity to the principles of promoting self-determination, nurturing and expanding valued social roles, and demonstrating a wholehearted commitment to working inclusively. (There may be life and lifestyle domains in need of significant additional attention at the end of the two year period.);

2. The exemplars will strive to span **a representative cross-section of the population** who have traditionally looked to the Sisters of Charity of Jesus & Mary for support services. The exemplar-set will include significant representation of persons with higher support need and persons presenting challenging behaviour.

The exemplar-set will span both new referrals and service users who have been involved with the Sisters for many years and who are currently embedded in traditional, group-based arrangements;

3. The person-centred wing will work within an exclusively person-centred paradigm. It will not use or fall back on – even as an at interim expedient – traditional group-based arrangements. (While persons who are currently embedded within group-based programmes are unlikely to “flip” at one decisive moment into entirely person-centred arrangements, any transitional and/or developmental work undertaken with them under the aegis of the person-centred wing will be of a person-centred character).

The person-centred vision will

- a) Espouse and manifest high levels of accountability to service users, families, and HSE both in terms of outcomes and cost-effectiveness;
- b) Exhibit a strong learning orientation. It will forge close links with national and international practitioners, mentors, and thinkers/writers within the broad person-centred school of ideas;
- c) Manifest an openness to evaluation, spanning a healthily self-critical orientation and an openness to external evaluation.

**N.B.** Participation in international exchange visits may be an important feature of the leadership and co-ordinator roles.

**N.B.2** The core responsibility linked to this role is that of making things happen. It is not a consultancy nor an advisory nor a co-ordinating role. It will, of course, involve each of these elements.

**Signed:**        **Brendan Broderick**  
                      **CEO**

## **KEY JEOPARDIES TO BE AVOIDED, MONDAY, 15/06/2009**

- Investing an excessive amount of time in open-ended exploration and discussion before moving to implement initial opportunities, arrangements and safeguards;
- Working off an inadequately developed vision for the person;
- Failing to listen deeply enough to the service user and the family member in developing the vision and the set of personal safeguards, taking too strong a leadership and executive position in working things out, not paying enough attention to ensuring that all key stakeholders are on board and signed up;
- Falling back on traditional centre-based and group-based arrangements as initial “holding” measures;
- Establishing an initial bridgehead of planning and support arrangements but failing to progressively extend and deepen this initial base;
- Over-promising and under-delivering;
- Agreeing arrangements with families that are not sufficiently inclusive, thereby eroding the possibility of future opportunities and growth;
- Paying inadequate attention to the dimension of social roles – and to ensuring that the social roles being created optimise reputation, image, and the potential for evolving follow-on roles.

**Signed:**

**Brendan Broderick**  
**CEO**

## HORIZON MENU: Dimensions of added value, 01/03/2011

1. More personal space, privacy, dignity, comfort.....a more individualised experience within an institutional context;
2. The same ambitions and intent but in the context of a move to a **dispersed community** setting;
3. Builds on 2 and extends the level of ambition through seeking to offer choice and some measure of autonomy **in** the realm of **everyday decision-making** (choosing clothes, menu, activities). A movement from being more individualised to becoming more *personalised*;
4. Takes 3 to a deeper level through proactively seeking to take a lead from the person...building a vision of a better future, taking seriously what the person is “saying” at the level of **life-impacting decision-making** (the big decisions that define one’s life, that set the context....), not resorting to sentimentality or “*professionalisation*” of issues / decisions to talk them out of – or out-trump – what they are saying;
5. Subsumes 4 while living more and more of their lives in ordinary settings...moving away from even a residual reliance on segregated or specialist settings, not only as a base but even to punctuate their day;
6. Subsumes 5 while building **strong networks of engagement and relationship** in their **neighbourhood** and **community** – developing more extensive and intensive relationships – culminating in the emergence of informal networks of “**natural**” **support** to complement “paid” supports;
7. Subsuming 6 and maintaining a **relentless focus** on **developing** and deepening meaningful, deep-rooted, **status-enhancing roles** that actively reverse the dynamic of social marginalisation, roles that ultimately render the disability as an incidental rather than defining feature.

This very rough schema is an attempt at trying to locate where various value-adding initiatives might be placed within a hierarchy of ambition. The assumption is that every progression from Phase 1 to Phase 7 adds further value.

One of the reasons for offering this schema is to counter two unhelpful perceptions:

1. That value is only added to the person's life when we realise the full expression of person-centredness / social role valorisation as in Phase 7;
2. That partial, compromised expressions of this ambitious model can be validly expressed as equivalent to full realisation of the model – “sure we're doing that already.....” (Making a start isn't the same as significant delivery.)

This schema presents a simplistic image of how this kind of work evolves. It overstates the idea of an orderly movement through a fixed sequence of situations. The core elements in the model are

- a) dignity / privacy;
- b) individualisation evolving to *personalisation*;
- c) autonomy / being in the driving seat;
- d) community presence / being “in the traffic” of the everyday world;
- e) acquiring socially valued roles.

In reality people may be at different “phases” in their evolution of each of these elements. However, if we bear these limitations in mind, it is nonetheless suggested that this schema may be of some value in helping us navigate and evaluate where we currently are.

**Signed:**

**Brendan Broderick**  
**CEO**