



"Start with the end in mind" ...

Karen Senior - Reaching for Rainbowskies
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In recent years as people have been able to spend the money that they are entitled to for social and health care support in more flexible ways there has been much controversy about what people spend this money on.

The rhetoric and legislative direction in the UK is that people can spend this money on what they want as long as it meets their social and health care need's and moves them forward in their lives.

In reality funding authorities have been spending time and resources producing lists that detail what people can buy and how much they can spend on certain items.

On the face of it you could say that this makes sense, as many people would not want to see public money spent on such things as Belly Dancing Lessons, Football Season Tickets and Sky TV, but we need to take a closer look.

We need to "start with the end in mind".

For example I worked alongside a young woman with mental health problems. She became anxious when going out, this had led to her spending most of her life indoors.

When we talked about the future the most important thing to her was to start going out again and eventually meet her old friends in Manchester.

She initially wanted to spend some of her personal budget on paying for the internet at home.

We talked about her days and how often she went out. During these discussions I found out that she went to the library every day to check her emails. It gave her a reason to get dressed, go out and be with people.

I think you can see where I'm going? We decided together that getting the internet at home wouldn't be the right thing for her.

Discussions with another gentleman I worked alongside led us to talking about how he wanted a better relationship with his children and to get out more again.

He decided to buy a car with his personal budget. I can hear many people asking "How would that help?".

It became apparent in our conversations that having a car would mean that he could pick his children up from school again, something he hadn't been able to do for a long time. It would mean that he could have conversations with them about school on the way home and feel more like a dad again.

Also this man's first episode of psychosis had been on a bus, after this he found it hard to use public transport. Support workers had tried for many years to support him with this but it just hadn't worked, the only way he felt safe traveling was in a car.

He also explained a car as being his "Cocoon", his "Safe place". It meant he would feel comfortable to travel further as he knew he had somewhere to retreat to.

So next time you wonder if its right to spend public money on things such as Belly Dancing lessons, football season tickets, Sky TV, the internet and cars remember to listen to people and "start with the end in mind".