

# Personal Assistant Workforce Summit

Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> November 2024  
Victoria Hall Sheffield



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## Introduction and background

2024, and another fantastic PA Summit!!



The 2024 PA Workforce Summit (to give it, its full, formal title!), was held in Sheffield for the Yorkshire and Humber Region and was all about creating a space for like-minded people, who are passionate about the role of Personal Assistants (PAs), to come together, connect and collaborate to make things happen! The event was well attended by 65 delegates, with 47% being from Local Authorities across the region and beyond, 20% being employers of PAs or PAs themselves, and 33% was people from health and social care organisations.

It was a fascinating event and a huge success, and this report aims to summarise the great discussions, the ideas and the call to action from the day.

This year the Summit was part of a wider event, 'Personalisation Week', celebrating personalised care and support and including an amazing exhibition of artwork from local artist Luke Horton on the theme of 'Personal Assistant and Proud'. The #PAandProud campaign was designed by people who employ PAs and by PAs themselves. Personalisation Week also included a public event to hear about what support is available to the people of Sheffield, to hear stories of people's experiences,



meeting lots of providers, and joining on-line events. Finally culminating in the PA Workforce Summit 2024 itself!

Following the success of the 2023 Summit, we wanted to build on the commitments made, to celebrate achievements over the last year, as well as recognise there is still lots more to do.

Once again, I extend my thanks and appreciation to all participants who contributed their time, experience, expertise, and dedication, and continue to champion this cause. Your commitment to this important agenda, aimed at increasing the visibility, and support for Personal Assistants is celebrated and very much welcome.

I especially want to thank the coproduction group who worked with me, Lead-Well for facilitating and managing the day for us and also to my Team in the weeks leading up to the Summit and wider Personalisation Week in making it relevant, engaging and a massive success!

We hope that this report inspires continued collaboration, advocacy, and action, marking a turning point in the journey toward a more visible, promoted, and responsive PA workforce. It is abundantly clear that while improving access to Direct Payments is a vital step, of equal importance is the creation and promotion of a robust PA workforce.

Read on to find out what was covered during the Summit.

**Mary Gardner**

**Strategic Commissioning Manager  
Sheffield City Council**



**Please note:**

Wherever you see this icon, **we invite you to take some practical action** to keep building momentum.

Remember, **this Summit needs to do Summat!!**



## Celebrating Personal Assistants!

Delegates, extended their own thanks, compliments and celebration to others, on the day, including a celebration of the new PA Champions, Personalisation Week 2024 and recognition that 'people are at the heart of what we do'! These included:

- The Disability Sheffield PA Register
- Spending a great day together (thank you)
- Great teamwork through high workloads
- Excellent hosting and coordinating
- Improved knowledge regarding PAs
- Personalisation Week 2024!
- Percy Street CIC
- People are at the heart of what we do
- Direct Payment Service Team
- Benefits of a recognition package for PAs
- Collaboration with FlyCheese to make [PA and Proud film](#)
- The new PA Champions!
- Amazing attitudes towards the people we work with.



## Our Guest Speakers

### **Cllr Angela Argenzio - Chair of the Adult Social Care Policy Committee, Sheffield**

- Explained how important the work is that we all do in this area of Social Care workforce development.
- Joined us in celebrating the impact it has.



### **Karen McCormick - Director and Founder of InCharge Ltd**

- InCharge helps people to manage their PA support.
- Karen is seeking support from other Local Authorities to subscribe to the App.
- She is also looking for families who employ PA's and PA's themselves to support trialing the App.
- For more information, [reach out to Karen via LinkedIn](#).



### **Chris Hamnett – CEO of Embrace Wigan and Lee, Seirian Davies and Hannah Kerr – PA Champions**

- The PA Champion role was one of Sheffield's big commitments at the end of the 2023 PA Summit.
- Employed by Embrace Wigan and Leigh in partnership with Sheffield City Council.
- Increased sign-up to the PA Register by over 150% since being in post.
- You can follow PA Champions Sheffield on Facebook or you can follow [Chris](#) or [Hannah](#) on LinkedIn to be kept informed.



### **Katie Weeks – Senior Policy Advisor in Adult Social Care Workforce Reform (DHSC)**

- Care Workforce Pathway is developed with Skills for Care and sets out what is needed to work in Adult Social Care.
- Care Pathway includes a Personal Assistant Role Category.
- They are testing the PA role category and looking for volunteers to be involved.
- Email [ascworkforcepathway@dhsc.gov.uk](mailto:ascworkforcepathway@dhsc.gov.uk) if you can help.



### Ciaran James Cameron and Tricia Nicoll (Gloriously Ordinary Lives)

- Ciaran and his Mum shared Ciaran’s experience of employing PAs.
- Ciaran’s account described the independence and fulfillment that can come from living a life with PAs.
- Important attributes included the need to ‘love Disney films, enjoy walking, be funny and like a joke, and help with crafts and climbing’.
- Follow [Tricia](#) to find out more about how people are living Gloriously Ordinary Lives.



### Alexis Chappell – Strategic Director of Adults’ Care and Wellbeing, Sheffield

- Alexis shared her ambitions for Social Care workforce development in Sheffield.
- She made a series of commitments to driving forward the PA agenda:
  - Hosting the next PA Summit in 2025
  - A re-affirmation to Self Directed Support as the core of ASC policy
  - Support PAs to be part of the Workforce Strategy work - i.e. having a PA as part of the workforce board



## Making Connections

A key aim of this year's Summit was to encourage and support the community to make connections with others, get to speak to new people and continue to build on established relationships. To do this, we held an 'icebreaker'; exercise called 'Inclusive Human Bingo'. The aim of the exercise was for each person to find someone who matched the description on their bingo card, so, for instance, 'find someone who doesn't look like you', or 'find someone who has a pet' etc. We worked hard to ensure the Summit was as inclusive as possible, and the Inclusive Bingo, was designed to help us challenge some of the unconscious bias we will experience in an activity like this.

Feedback on the day, demonstrated that the 'icebreaker' was a fun, energising and engaging way to get people talking to each other. The conversations went on way after someone called 'Bingo' and won the prize!



## Working Together – Sharing Our Progress

We already knew from hearing from our participants before the event that there had been some great progress since the PA Workforce summit in 2023, so this session was an opportunity for participants to work together, share updates and to showcase achievements.

The fantastic posters that were created are all below. One per page so you can read them.



### Take Action:

If anything on the posters resonates, please use the contact details provided to get in touch and get involved!





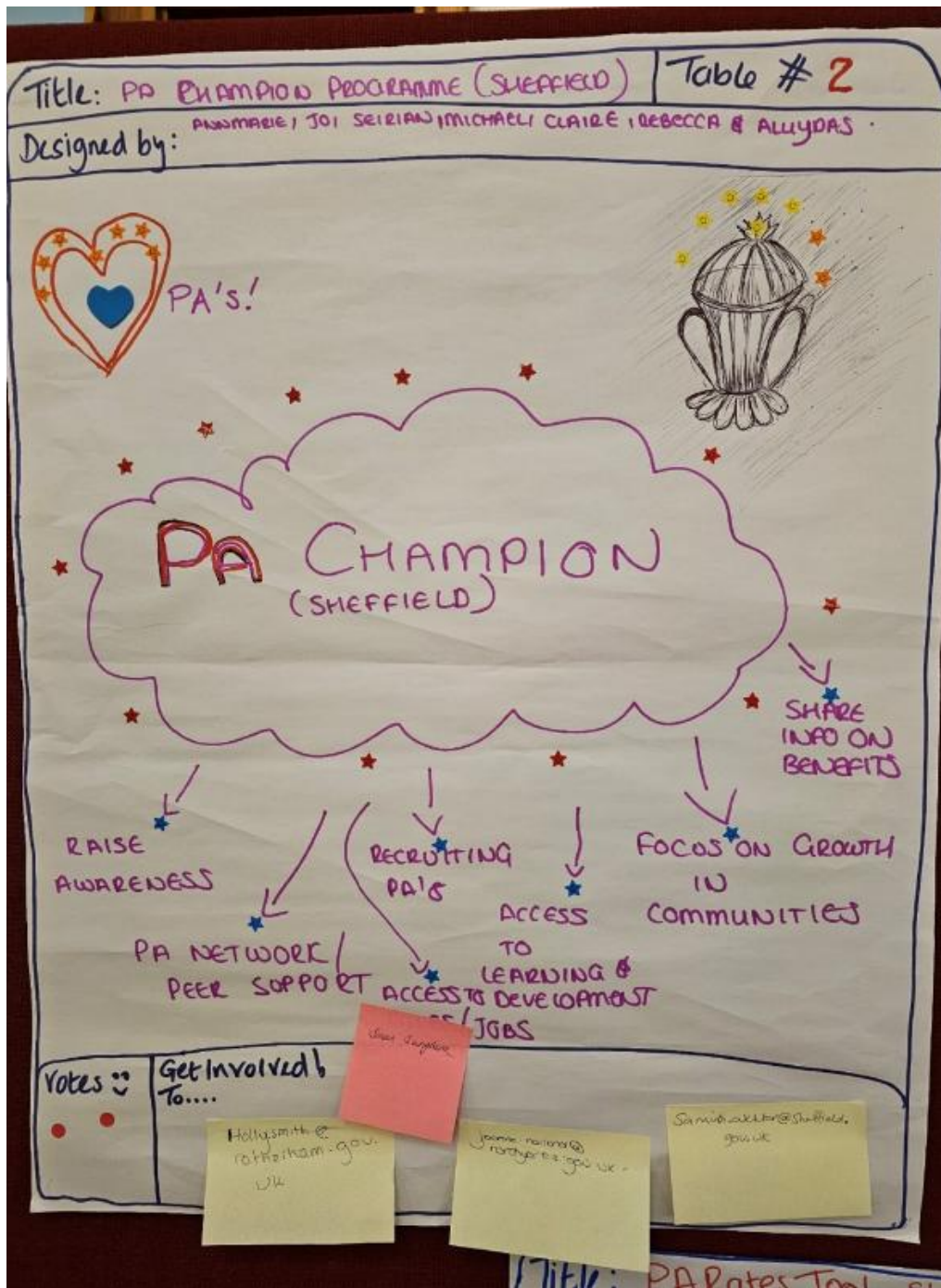
### Creating a PA Support Network

To get involved, contact: [s.davies@championsheffield.org.uk](mailto:s.davies@championsheffield.org.uk) or

[h.kerr@championsheffield.org.uk](mailto:h.kerr@championsheffield.org.uk)



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**The PA Champion Programme (Sheffield)**

To get involved, contact: [s.davies@championsheffield.org.uk](mailto:s.davies@championsheffield.org.uk) or

[h.kerr@championsheffield.org.uk](mailto:h.kerr@championsheffield.org.uk)



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### The PA Champions

To get involved, contact: [s.davies@championsheffield.org.uk](mailto:s.davies@championsheffield.org.uk) or

[h.kerr@championsheffield.org.uk](mailto:h.kerr@championsheffield.org.uk)





### Path into Direct Payments

To get involved, please contact [directpaymentsupportservice@sheffield.gov.uk](mailto:directpaymentsupportservice@sheffield.gov.uk)



**Title:** Employee Assistance Programme Table # 5  
**Designed by:** David, Karen, Karen, Isaac, Catherine

**Question:** How do you support your PAs?  
 Do you want to be the best employer?

↓  
**YES!**  
 ↓

ILG-PA provide an Employee Assistance Programme which includes access to counselling, debt management, legal advice, access to a wellbeing app and discounts...

all for just £20\* per year!  
 \* or FREE for PAs in Sheffield 😊

**PROSPER**  
**quality**  
**DIFFERENCE**

**WATCH THIS SPACE**

**TAKE ACTION**  
 ilg-pa.com

head to this website to find out more & sign up!

**YOU'LL** Stretch the limits  
**BEST**

**votes** ☆  
 Get Involved!  
 To.....

ILG-PA  
 hello@ilg-pa.com  
 hello.rowan@york.gov.uk

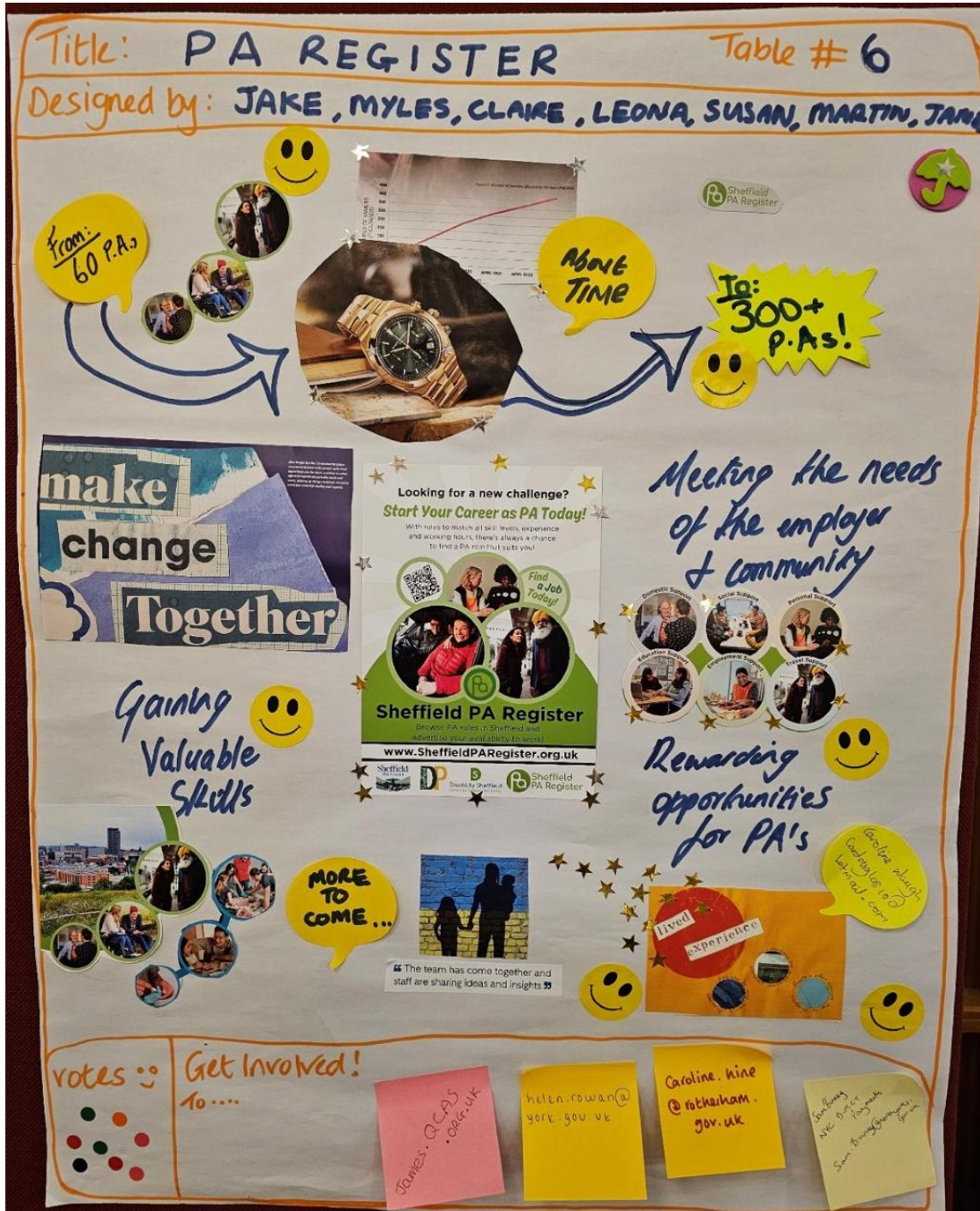
**Title:** DIRECT PAYMENTS FROM HEALTH + ADULT SERVICES Table # 9

### The Employee Assistance Programme

To get involved, contact [hello@ilg-pa.com](mailto:hello@ilg-pa.com)



Lead-Well.org

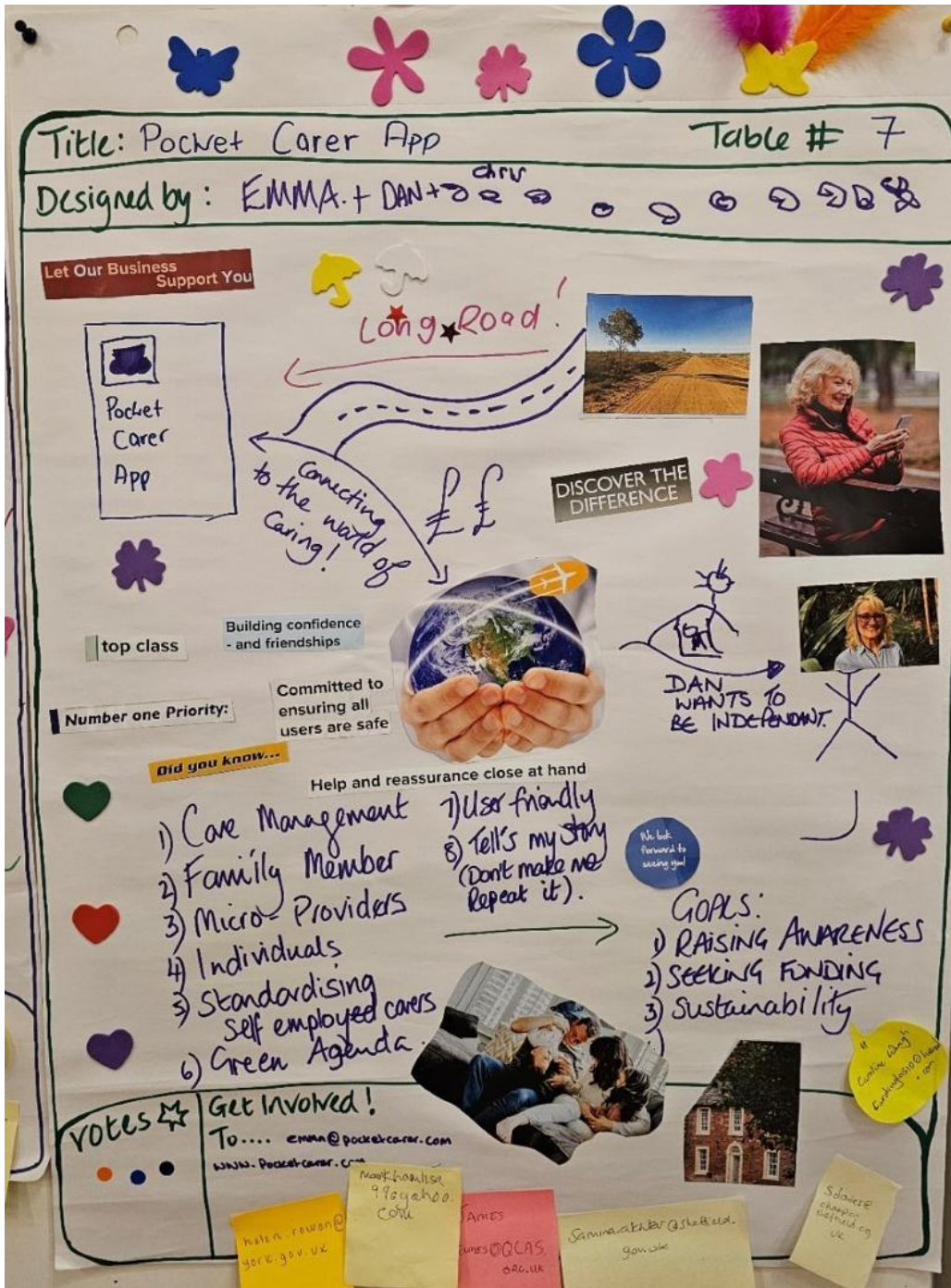


**The PA Register**

To get involved, contact: [s.davies@championsheffield.org.uk](mailto:s.davies@championsheffield.org.uk) or

[h.kerr@championsheffield.org.uk](mailto:h.kerr@championsheffield.org.uk)



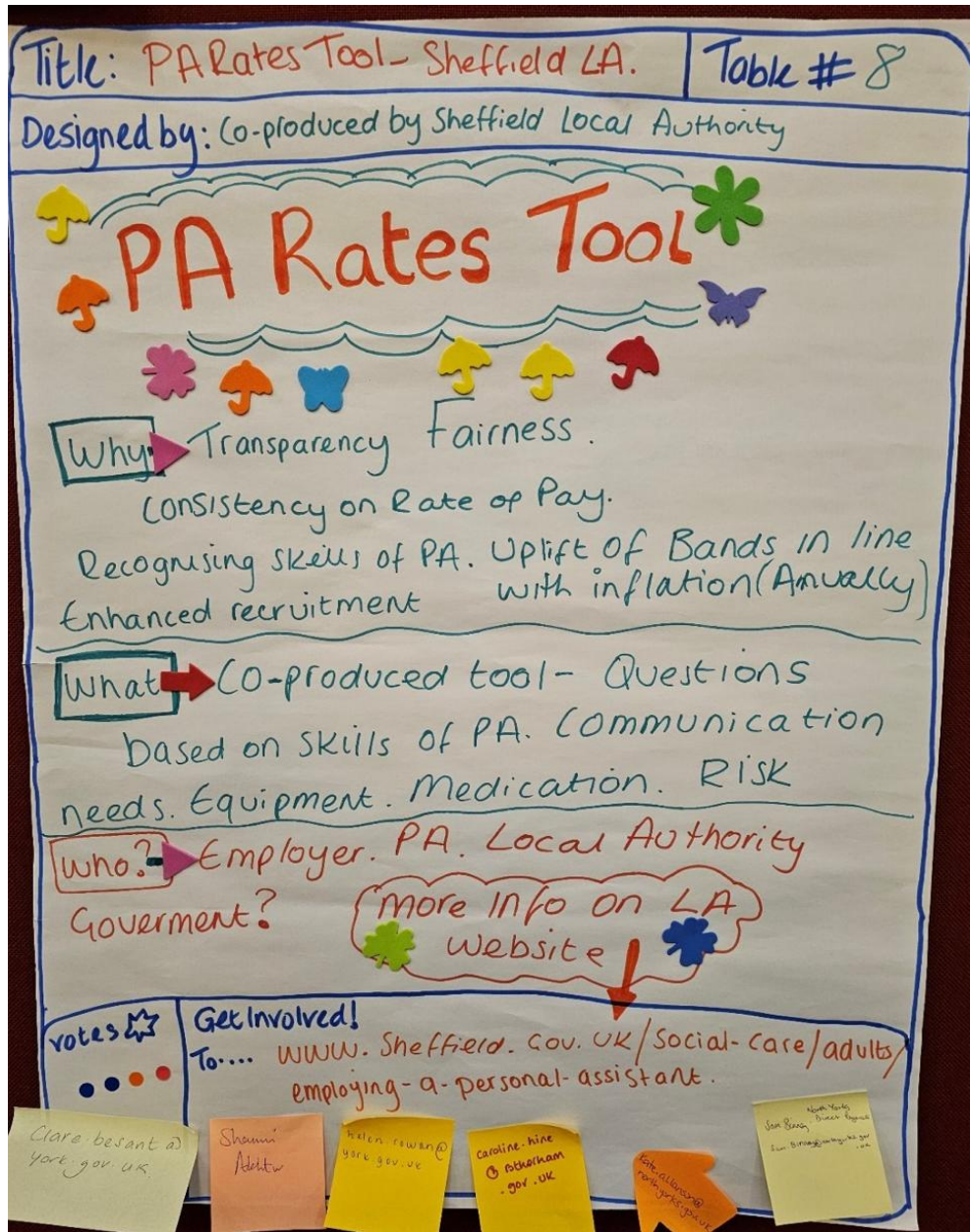


**The Pocket Carer App**

To get involved please contact [emma@pocketcarer.com](mailto:emma@pocketcarer.com)



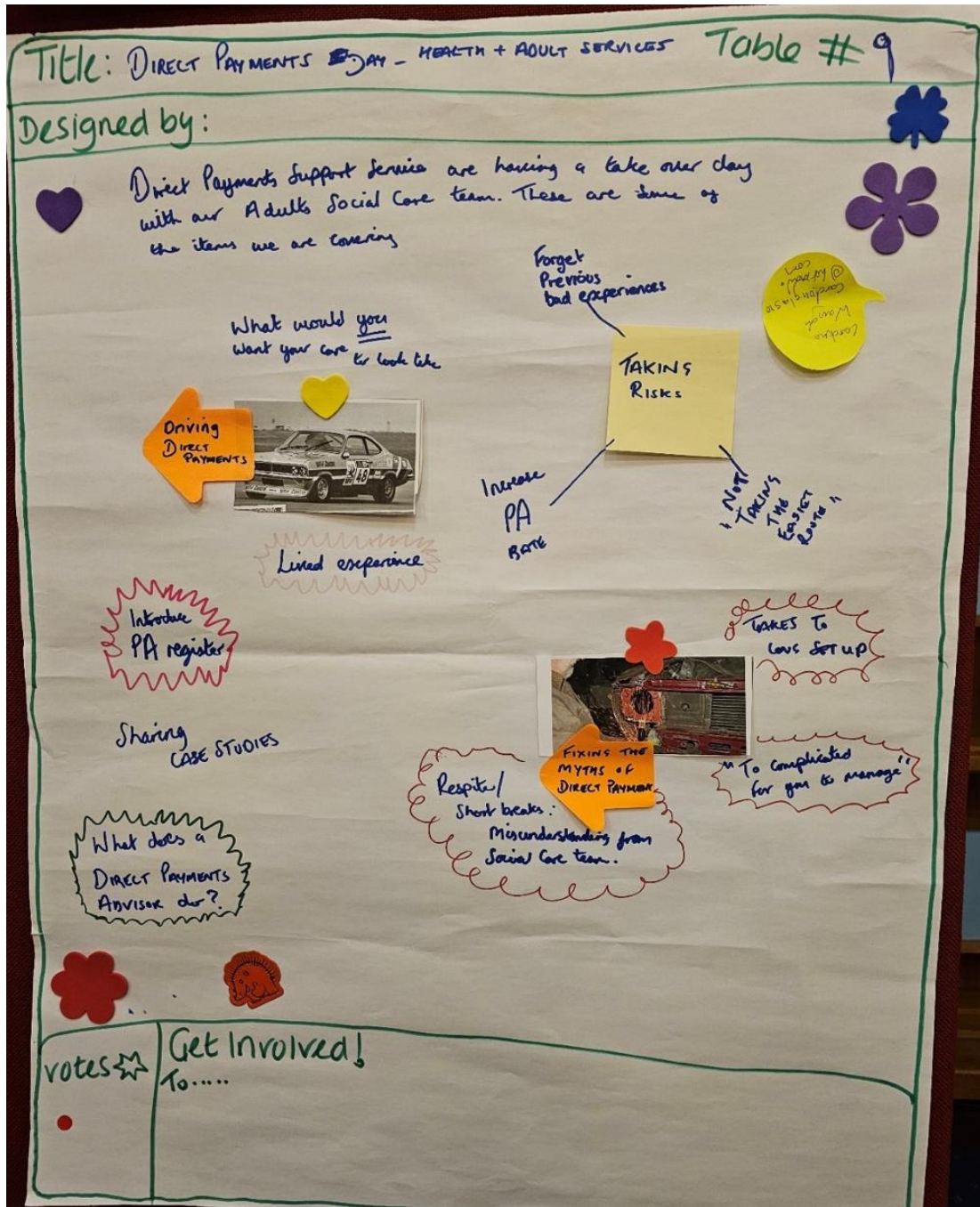
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**The PA Rates Tool (Sheffield)**

For more information, please go to [Employing a personal assistant | Sheffield City Council](https://www.sheffield.gov.uk/social-care/adults/employing-a-personal-assistant)  
 (https://www.sheffield.gov.uk/social-care/adults/employing-a-personal-assistant)





### Direct Payments Day

To get involved, contact [DPCommissioning@sheffield.gov.uk](mailto:DPCommissioning@sheffield.gov.uk)



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## Working Together: Focusing on key topics

While it was important to celebrate successes and hear about the fantastic work that's been taking place, it's also important to still acknowledge that there's a huge amount still to do and some tricky issues that we are trying to work through together.

The coproduction group discussed this and recognised that if we try to tackle all of this, we are likely to end up feeling overwhelmed and despondent. And so, they came up with a long list of subjects and then narrowed these down to three key topics for focus at the Summit:

- 1. Communicating the PA role; information and messaging**
- 2. Developing a PA Charter**
- 3. The Local Authority's responsibility and role; providing support and helping people to understand the PA role**

The 3 topics were shared out across the 9 tables, where they were discussed and people nominated themselves to be involved in keeping the conversation going. The write up is available in the following pages.



### Take Action:

If anything on the next few pages resonates, please use the contact details provided to get in touch and get involved!



## Key Topic 1: Communicating the PA role; information and messaging

### The Problems

- Lack of awareness of the role
- Lack of information or profile
- PA as a term is used in different industries – misunderstanding / conflict especially when searching for information
- Not “being in a box” makes it hard to describe
- Key stakeholders not aware or comfortable in promoting e.g. DHSC, CQC, media leaders
- Different organisations send different messages

### Solutions

- PA Champions!
- Engaging the media
- National campaigns #identity! Need clever think tank people to create adverts!
- Leadership of cultural change
- Connecting to self-funders
- Best practice around use of PAs (CQC)
- Re-branding the title “Personal Assistant”
- Target specific groups in the community - grassroots organisations, events.
- Central communication teams need to send consistent messages
- Increase diversity in the PA market

### Increase social worker understanding

- Mandatory training and workshops
- The easiest way isn’t necessarily the best
- COST EFFECTIVE – You will save money!
- Strengthen curriculum content at degree and school level
- Continuing Professional Development (CPD)
- Ensuring social care practitioners ALSO have the same training
- Likewise for managers.



### Take Action:

Interested in joining this conversation? Contact these people:

- **Lead** - Susan Sanghera – [susan.sanghera@leics.gov.uk](mailto:susan.sanghera@leics.gov.uk)
- Courtney Smith – [c.smith@embracewiganandleigh.org.uk](mailto:c.smith@embracewiganandleigh.org.uk)
- Hannah Kerr - [h.kerr@championsheffield.org.uk](mailto:h.kerr@championsheffield.org.uk)



## Key Topic 2: Developing a PA Charter

### Questions to consider:

- Do we need it?
- Who is it for?
- Who wants this?
- Who has been consulted?
- Is there a pre-set agenda?

### Who is a Charter for?

- Charter needs to be for local councils to protect the sanctity of the individual employer and PA relationship (e.g., uphold the Care Act!)
- For PAs and PA Employers to know what is expected and the support available

### What is a Charter for?

- Acknowledge, listen & support PAs
  - RESPECT
  - Health and wellbeing commitment to those they support
- Engage with PA's, employers

### What should a Charter include?

- Least amount of bureaucracy possible – minimum admin burden and light touch monitoring and review
- Make sure there is enough money in budget to support training and development
- Invest in support services – external / user-led and then TRUST THEM!
- Make sure there is parity of pay
- Pay attention to the image of PAs and the unique role
- Direct payment as default and social worker confident and competent to make this
- Collection of actions to support PAs

### How we create a charter:

- Needs to be co-produced
  - PAs, employers, LA, i.e. People with lived experience
- Start with a blank canvas
- Needs to be a living document
- There is a role for the PA champions
- It needs to be taken seriously, not a tick box
- This is about Leadership: 'this is how we do things around here!'

### How do we share it?

- Publicise
  - Locally
  - Sheffield Directory



- Websites
- Sheffield Parent Carer Forum website
- Social media

Summit  
to do  
Summat

### Take Action:

Interested in joining this conversation? Contact these people:

- Susan Sanghera – [susan.sanghera@leics.gov.uk](mailto:susan.sanghera@leics.gov.uk)
- Rachel Glossop, [Rachel.glossop@sheffield.gov.uk](mailto:Rachel.glossop@sheffield.gov.uk)
- Hannah Kerr, [h.kerr@championsheffield.org.uk](mailto:h.kerr@championsheffield.org.uk)
- Serian Davies, [s.davies@championsheffield.org.uk](mailto:s.davies@championsheffield.org.uk)



## Key Topic 3: The Local Authority's responsibility and role; providing support and helping people to understand the PA role

### Problem

- Enabling creative support in a risk averse world
- Lack of tailored information

### Solutions

- Best practice
- Celebrating success
- Support and guidance for LA/Health Sector
- Signposting for support
- Making direct payments a success

### Actions

- Exploring PA vs self-employed person pay roles
- Incentivising individual employers
- Trying to establish parity with peers
- Collective voice for the workforce

### Who?

- Rotherham and York to take inspiration from Sheffield
- ICB – finance re personal health budgets

### How can LAs help?

- New model to increase the VISIBILITY of PAs and to act as an additional, flexible workforce, e.g., liaising with hospital, Social Worker to support timely discharge.
- Operate as a micro-provider – aim would be to provide person with flexible support to get back to independence and to link into long-term community support – which is personalised and meets EDI.
- Enable holiday/sick cover
- Pooling / apportioning funds from Local Authority
- Central hub – locality hub
- Encourage self-directed support and move towards a micro-provider model
- Avoid prescriptive lists when giving information on the PA role
- Give examples, case studies, show real life lived experience to provide information
- Raise awareness:
  - Job fairs
  - Online information, social media
  - Helplines (national, free)
- Produce accessible information



- Varied formats e.g. easy read, AI, braille, translation
- Dedicated sensory teams

### How do we increase Social Workers' understanding and promotion of PAs?

*"Local Authority, senior Leadership team"*

- SW training (mandatory)
  - *"Social workers are only as good as the process"*
- Clear guidance/processes
  - *"Leaders put in!"*
- Tools/resources/access to info – database (best practice)
- Having lots of different ways to attract PAs – not just a register
- Have access to case studies/examples - encourage creativity sharing stories
- Locality champions
- Checklist/toolkit for Social Worker's to use when working with families



#### Take Action:

Interested in joining this conversation? Contact these people:

- **Lead** - Andy Buxton SCC Direct Payments, [Andy.Buxton@sheffield.gov.uk](mailto:Andy.Buxton@sheffield.gov.uk)
- Sam Binney NYC Direct Payments, [Sam.Binney@northyorks.gov.uk](mailto:Sam.Binney@northyorks.gov.uk)
- Blake Williamson [Williamson\\_blake@ymail.com](mailto:Williamson_blake@ymail.com)
- Lisa Markham - [markhamlisa99@yahoo.com](mailto:markhamlisa99@yahoo.com)
- Courtney Smith, [C.smith@embracewiganandleigh.org.uk](mailto:C.smith@embracewiganandleigh.org.uk)
- Rachel Glossop, [Rachel.glossop@sheffield.gov.uk](mailto:Rachel.glossop@sheffield.gov.uk)
- Hannah Kerr, [h.kerr@championsheffield.org.uk](mailto:h.kerr@championsheffield.org.uk)
- Seirian Davies, [s.davies@championsheffield.org.uk](mailto:s.davies@championsheffield.org.uk)



## Working Together – Moving Things Forward

One of the key outcomes from the Summit is to grow and continue building momentum. So, in the final session, we invited participants to move around the room and to:

- Review the outputs everyone had shared during the day and add their contact details
- Say hi to the speakers
- Get chatting with people
- If people had new ideas to share, add them to the ‘new ideas’ flipchart
- Take some quiet time to reflect

In addition to adding their names to the items included in the report above, a few additional ideas were shared:

- Susan Sanghera, creating a diverse PA market and a PA workforce for the local community. PA Recruitment and retention - [susan.sanghera@leics.gov.uk](mailto:susan.sanghera@leics.gov.uk)
- Do they have to be self-employed? I can't just pick a friend off the street! Do they have to be DBS if I trust them? Caroline - [cardouglas10@hotmail.com](mailto:cardouglas10@hotmail.com)
- Timeline of Activities and Events – a collaborative document that will be hosted on the [In-Control](http://In-Control) website to share training, discussions and meetings taking place across the region. In the meantime, please review the embedded document below and if you have any questions or know of any events taking place, please contact [aimee.kay@sheffield.gov.uk](mailto:aimee.kay@sheffield.gov.uk) or [andy.buxton@sheffield.gov.uk](mailto:andy.buxton@sheffield.gov.uk).



Timeline of Events.xlsx



### Take Action:

Interested in joining any of these conversations? Please use the contact details to contact the people who raised the ideas.



## Visit to PA and Proud Exhibition

To close the PA Workforce Summit 2024, participants were invited to attend the fantastic PA and Proud Exhibition in the Sheffield Winter Gardens. We gave people a chance to win a print of their favourite Luke Horton Art work. All they had to do was take a photo of their favourite artwork and post on LinkedIn or Instagram, with the hashtags #PAandProud and #EmployPAs to be entered into a prize drawer.

We had a great response to this, and we announced the winner of the competition on the 25<sup>th</sup> of November 2024. Congratulations Amber Raynes!

Yesterday, I attended the campaign launch for [#PersonalisationWeek](#) which showcases the work that PAs do and to show how this role benefits both the individuals employing PAs and the PAs themselves.

The amazing Jennifer Bedford has helped write my story leading up to being a PA and the great things that come with the role. Thank you so much!

If you get the chance, please go visit the Winter Gardens for the full exhibition where you can read all the stories and see the amazing artwork by [#LukeHorton](#).

[#EmployPAs #PAandProud](#)



## Thanks, and keep the conversation going!

Thanks to everyone who helped design, presented at and participated in the day. It was a fantastic atmosphere and the continued conversations since then have been remarkable!

Keep your eyes on LinkedIn for ongoing updates and reminders about the next steps. We'll also be regularly sharing some of your photos so you never know when you might be featured! Please react, comment and repost and remember to use...

**#EmployPAs #PAandProud #PASummit**

