

Personal Assistants Programme Board

Personal Assistants Programme Board



Content

1. Background
2. Our pathways
3. Provide training and support that maximises strong mutual relationships between PAs and Employers - pathway progress
4. Supporting the development of the PA workforce - pathway progress
5. Value and support employers - pathway progress
6. Conclusions

Background

About This Work

The Scottish Government has created a Personal Assistant (PA) Programme Board to recognise the invaluable work of PAs and also address wider issues which affect PAs and enable them to be fully included as part of the social care workforce. The key function of the new Programme Board will be to advise the Minister on the steps needed to fully recognise the important role that PAs play in the social care workforce and ensure that necessary changes are fed into long term work-streams. Personal Assistants are currently not registered or regulated and so are amongst the most disparate and difficult to reach workforce both in terms of geography and complexity.

Following a tender process the Scottish Government appointed Matter of Focus to engage in a collaborative process with employers, Personal Assistants, representative bodies and other stakeholders to undertake a series of outcome mapping workshops. This report shows the outputs from that process. Outcome maps developed were intended to inform the work of the Programme Board and to be used to make recommendations for a work programme to improve outcomes for Personal Assistants, employers and the social care system more widely.

Aims And Objectives

In September and October 2021 Matter of Focus and the Personal Assistants Programme Board met over three workshops to develop a high level outcome map which will inform the work plan of the Programme Board. We used the OutNav approach to outcome focused mapping and evaluation. OutNav enables public service organisations and funders to make effective use of their data and information to learn, improve and tell the story about the difference they make.

At the start of the workshop process, participants shared their hopes and fears about this work with the Programme Board, their responses are summarised below. It is significant to note that the number of responses about fear was significantly higher than for hopes.

Hopes for this work:

- Increasing the recognition of and valuing the role of Personal Assistants,
- Lived experience is valued, heard, and responded to,
- This work enables further planning and prioritising,
- That this leads to change.

Fears for this work:

- That nothing changes, the workshops become a talking shop where lived experience is heard but not acted upon,
- Rules and regulations are put in place that create additional barriers or erode what already works well in the PA-employer relationship,
- That this work and changes suggested by it are not implemented.

Overall, we found excellent levels of engagement in the workshop sessions, which were held online using zoom, and also within sessions. 39 people participated in at least one workshop sessions. We used the collaborative whiteboard tool Miro, to gather views and to work collaboratively. People also contributed extensively verbally and through the chat function. We counted 109 contributions to the chat alone at the last workshop in addition to many contributions added directly to Miro.

Context For Delivery

Key themes that emerged in this analysis are;

- The tension between the desire to and potential benefits of professionalising the PA workforce through training and registration, against the unique value that more informal and relational arrangements offer both employer and PA

- The need for investment in and support for employers, not only to ensure they have the knowledge and skills to be a good employer, but that the budgets are sufficient for them to act as one in terms of pay, terms and conditions
- Training and development for both PA and employer includes both technical skills as well as those to support relationship building and the unique partnership

A more detailed write up of the context analysis for this work can be found below:

Enablers for success – things that help Personal Assistants in their work

Individual

- Prospective PAs are aware of the role and view it as a skilled and rewarding career
- Employers have the skills and confidence to take on this position
- Strong positive relationships between the employer and their PA where they are able to work together effectively as a team with shared values grounded in the Independent Living Movement
- PAs have both the technical and the soft skills that enable them to provide support

Social

- Peer-support networks and training opportunities for employers to enable them to be a good employer
- Both formal and informal networks of Personal Assistants who offer peer support and information and a sense of community
- Local Authorities recognise and value the role of the PA and provide consistent support

Material

- High quality, appropriate, funded training is available for both PA and Employer
- Voluntary registration of PAs may enable them to access additional benefits (e.g. £500 Covid payment), and enable recruitment
- Employer Handbook and Standards give useful guidance[GR1]

Barriers to success – things that hinder Personal Assistants in their work

Individual

- Prospective employers lack confidence, skills, and support to take on this role and are put off by paperwork and responsibilities
- Lack of PA availability, especially in rural areas, makes it difficult to take up this option for employers

Social

- PAs role becomes isolated
- Lack of awareness in the wider public about what a PA role is means many aren't aware it is a career option for them
- Both employer and PA don't access advice and support until a problem reaches crisis point
- Training is not resourced or is inappropriate for what is required
- There is inconsistency in how SDS is applied across Local Authorities

Material

- Regulations which are held too stringently may put off both potential employers and potential PAs (registration not regulation)
- Employing a PA is not resourced enough to ensure PAs receive professional pay, good terms and conditions, and to cover the cost of paying for and attending training
- Third sector lacks capacity and funding to raise the profile of PAs and SDS alone
- Technology is not a sufficient substitute for direct support from a PA (but can sometimes be presented as one)

Methodological Approach

The work shown in this report has been carried out using the Matter of Focus approach. The "Matter of Focus" approach is a theory-based approach to outcome monitoring and evaluation, learning and improvement that builds on contribution analysis. In using the approach, we have gone through a logical and structured process of:

- Developing a theory of change for our project informed by an understanding of the context in which we operate.
- Agreeing one or more outcome maps that show how we think our activities contribute to outcomes, and what needs to be in place to make this happen.
- Identifying clear change mechanisms by which our project or programme works, these are shown in our pathways.
- Developing a plan to gather data to understand whether or not we are making the progress towards outcomes we hope. This includes integrating current data and information we collect, as well as capturing data specifically for this purpose.
- Systematically reviewing this data against each of the stepping stones for each pathway in the outcome map.
- Summarising key findings against each of the stepping stones to tell our contribution story.

Outcome mapping was based on three workshops with Programme Board members, PAs and PA Employers, as follows:

- Context analysis workshop using the ISM model,
- Success stories workshop to assess what already works well in this domain,
- An outcome mapping workshop to translate context and what works into a map and pathways.

This report has been produced in OutNav, a software system developed by Matter of Focus that supports organisations to take a collaborative and outcome focused approach to evaluation planning, implementation analysis and reporting.

Our outcome map



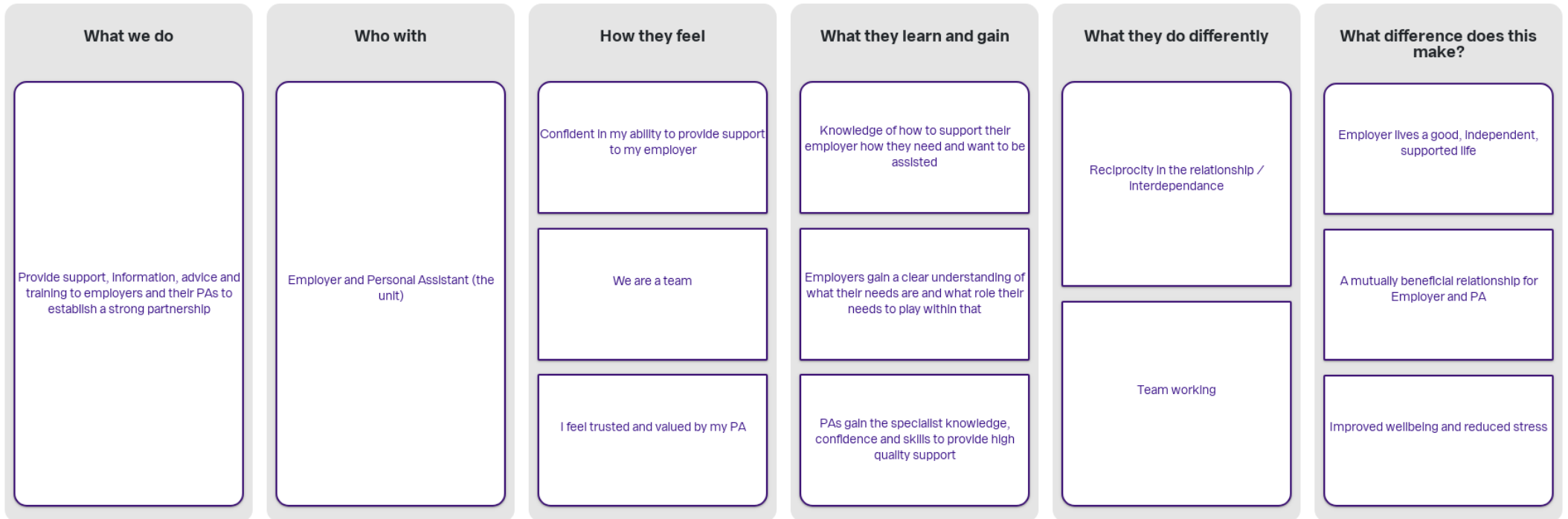
Our pathways

Provide training and support that maximises strong mutual relationships between PAs and Employers

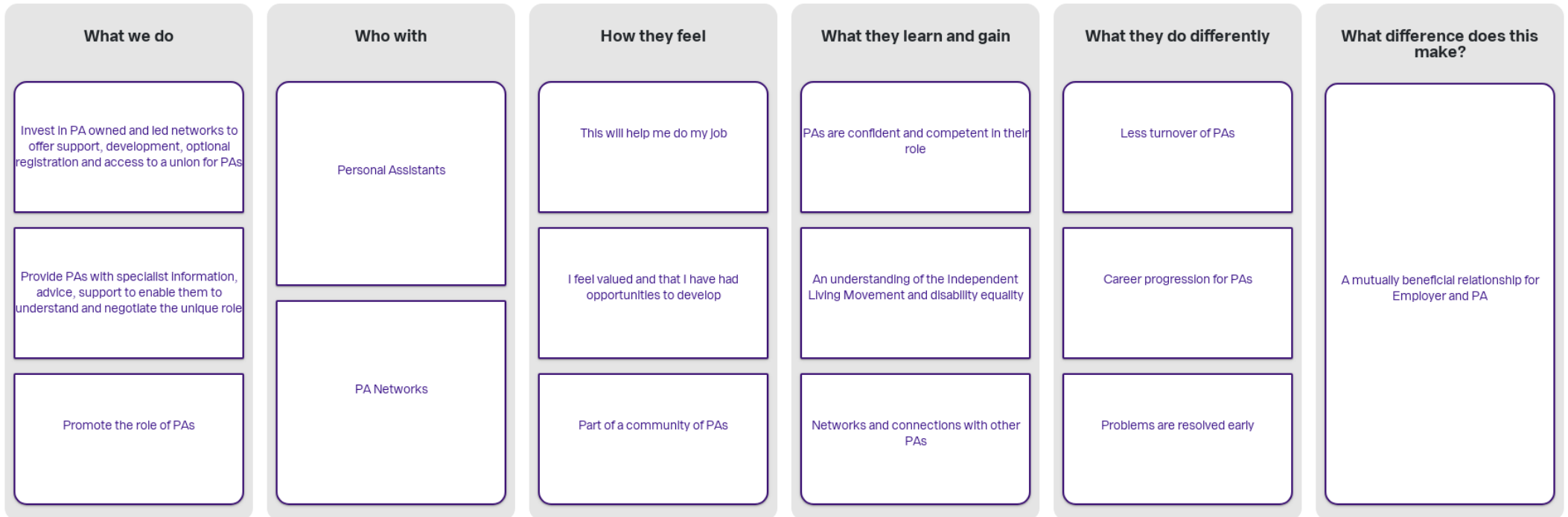
Supporting the development of the PA workforce

Value and support employers

Provide training and support that maximises strong mutual relationships between PAs and Employers - pathway progress



Supporting the development of the PA workforce - pathway progress



Value and support employers - pathway progress



What we do	Who with	How they feel	What they learn and gain	What they do differently	What difference does this make?
Invest in organisations to support people to understand their options and be a successful employer	Employers	I am a supportive employer	Ability to set clear expectations, boundaries in the relationship, and to have difficult conversations		Employer lives a good, independent, supported life
Provide a range of supports to employers to prepare for and fulfil their roles	Disabled Person's Organisations		Ability to act as a good employer, management skills to direct and work with PAs	Problems are resolved early	
Allocate sufficient budgets to enable employers to offer fair terms and conditions and support professional development of PAs	Social Workers	I can get help when I need it (employer)	Employers gain a clear understanding of what their needs are and what role their needs to play within that		Self-Directed Support works as it is supposed to and more people take it up

Conclusions

We believe that this report provides a starting point from which the Programme Board can make recommendations around a work programme to improve outcomes for Personal Assistants, employers and the wider social care workforce. The process which led to its development was robust and involved a diverse range of stakeholders who were able to contribute effectively and openly. Additional work may be undertaken to test and validate the maps with wider groups of stakeholders.

This report was generated in



Developed by Matter of Focus.

OutNav supports initiatives with a vision for social change to understand and track how their work makes a difference.

The cloud-based tool enables teams to apply a practical and meaningful approach to outcomes-focused monitoring and evaluation, developed by Matter of Focus.

<https://www.matter-of-focus.com>