

Centre 404's Personal Support Worker Finding and Matching Service was started in 2009 due to the demand for the service from family carers. The service was initially started with one service user who had a few hours support a week through a direct payment.

We secured pilot funding for the project as an innovation start up grant in 2010 to enable us to develop and grow the service. This involved drawing up contracts for support, bespoke training for personal support workers, developing new finance systems, recruiting staff, developing marketing material and actively promoting the service.

As of 2019, the service now supports over 60 people across North London, providing over 1,400 support hours each month. It is run as a social enterprise and is now self-funding. The project has clear monthly delivery targets and a growth plan to ensure it remains sustainable.

We work with adults and children across North London. Our team of Personal Assistants provide support to people in their own homes or out in the community with a wide range of activities, including support around health issues, attending social activities, managing household paperwork and bills, and developing a range of skills and working towards person-centred goals. We work continuously to build on and develop relationships within these boroughs to maintain awareness of the service from Local Councils as well as other families. Our key stakeholders, in addition to our service users and their families, are the care managers who make referrals to the service. Developing strong working relationships with care managers in all boroughs is key to ensure referrals and the growth of the service.

Crucial to the success of the project and its excellent reputation is the close and ongoing involvement of families and service users. We maintain regular contact and seek feedback to make improvements to the service where needed. The focus remains on service user choice of when their support happens and with which staff member.

As well as providing Personal Assistants matched to people's individual needs, we can manage their finances in the form of an Individual Service Fund (ISF). Our ISF service was initially part of a pilot scheme in Islington but is now a standard service we offer.

In addition to growth in service user numbers and delivery hours, our goals for the project include developing and marketing the project across 6 London boroughs: Hackney, Barnet, and Enfield as well as the existing boroughs of Islington, Camden and Haringey.