Since the late 1990s, there has been a concerted policy drive across social care towards cash based modes of support and strategies to personalise services. Support for this shift was initiated by the disabled peoples’ movement, both in the UK and globally. Policies introducing direct payments in lieu of provided services have been secured gradually as a central plank of the campaign for independent living.

Subsequently successive governments have promoted a shift towards personalisation as part of a wider focus to develop local care markets and to facilitate enhanced choice and control in service provision. In Scotland, this has been pursued through new legislation for self-directed support. As the new policy is introduced local authorities and providers face challenges in transforming social care. The authors examine some of the key themes and debates emerging from the implementation of this policy. These include a look at the evolution of this concept and its development within the wider personalisation agenda, as well as a focus on the new language that is emerging and the changing roles for users, carers, local authorities and service providers. The authors focus on the impact of change for front-line workers and reassess the progress of personalisation across the UK and in Europe during a time of widespread austerity and financial cuts.

Written for professional and academic audiences Self-directed Support: Personalisation, Choice & Control will stimulate those wrestling with these themes from policy and professional perspectives and provide essential analysis for those studying health and social policy.

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