



# The Meanings of Funded Support

## SUMMARY REPORT

# Key terms

## Funded support

Funded support, in the context of Future Pathways, refers to both Delivery Partner and Discretionary Fund support.

## People with lived experience

People with lived experience, in the context of this report, refers to people who have experienced abuse or neglect while in care in Scotland. We sometimes use the word “survivor” in this report to denote a person with lived experience. We understand that not everyone who has experience of abuse and/or neglect would use this term to describe themselves, and so, where possible, we have not used this term in this report. When we work directly with an individual, we will always use the words they find preferable.

## Personal outcomes

Personal outcomes (or outcomes) relate to what matters most to the person and the changes they would like to make. Everyone’s outcomes are unique to them. For example, someone’s outcome may be to experience more independence in their lives

## About Future Pathways

Future Pathways provides support to people who experienced abuse or neglect when they were a child in the Scottish care system. The service is delivered by the In Care Survivors Alliance, which consists of four partners: Glasgow Psychological Trauma Service, Health in Mind, Penumbra Mental Health and Scottish Government.

The vision of the Alliance is that people with lived experience lead full, healthy and independent lives. Future Pathways aims to do this by helping people registered with us to access support that is right for them. We also aim to help other services to learn and improve so they can provide more effective support to people with lived experience.

The main way Future Pathways provides support is through support coordination. When support begins, each person works with a dedicated Support Coordinator. According to the model of our service, together, the person and their Support Coordinator have conversations about the person's outcomes and create a plan for the person's support. The Support Coordinator then facilitates access to a wide range of resources and services which are aligned with their personal outcomes. People can access different types of support through Future Pathways including:

- Support from existing services including statutory and third sector services
- Support provided by our network of Delivery Partners
- Material support to purchase material or digital products and non-contracted services

Everyone's support is tailored to their personal outcomes, and so each person's experience at Future Pathways is unique to them.

## About funded support

The primary purpose of Future Pathways' funded support is to help people registered with us progress their personal outcomes. In some instances, funded support is used to address a person's immediate needs, even when these are not related to the person's outcome.

People we support can access two different types of funded support. These are:

- Delivery Partner support which can be used to facilitate access to a service provided by a Delivery Partner, such as a counselling or record search service.
- Discretionary Fund support which can be used to purchase material or digital products, or non-contracted professional services, such as furniture or driving tuition.

People registered with us access funded support through support coordination. When support begins, Support Coordinators facilitate conversations about what matters most to the person and together they make a plan for their Future Pathways support. The plan outlines the different types of support that the Support Coordinator will facilitate access to and how these will contribute to the person's outcome(s). Planning for support involves discussing and agreeing how to use funded support in the most impactful way for the person. Once these conversations have taken place the person is supported to access funded support according to their support plan.

We aim to review support with every person accessing our support at least every six months. These conversations involve reflecting on the impact of the support that has been accessed. And it is an opportunity to consider how the person's support plan could be changed to support the person to progress towards their outcome or identify another outcome.

We know that many factors can affect people's access to and use of our funded support. For example, as we have learned more, how we support people to access this aspect of our support has evolved. And it may also be affected by wider contextual factors such as the increased cost-of-living and the Covid-19 pandemic.

## About this report

This report draws together learning from two evaluations we have carried out in the last year about our funded support. These evaluations applied a mixed methods approach to a wide range of sources.

In this report, we share what we have learned about

- The complexities of accessing funded support for people with lived experience
- How we support equitable access to our funded support
- The difference that funded support can make

We know from our own work that facilitating access to funded support can pose challenges and can impact people's relationships with their Support Coordinator and with Future Pathways. We believe that the learning we present in this report may be relevant to other services supporting people to access funded support or support provided by partner organisations.

## Part one: Accessing funded support for people with lived experience

We know that people with lived experience can face specific challenges in relation to accessing funded support from services including our own.

Existing research indicates that this is because people with lived experience can come to associate money (and by extension funded support) with power and with their previous experience(s) of abuse and/or neglect. This association can create and/or exacerbate feelings of shame around money and material support.

How people feel in relation to money and material support can detrimentally affect people's relationships with services which facilitate material support or access to resources. It can also affect people's behaviors in relation to money and material support. This can look different for different people. For some, it can be difficult to express their feelings and needs in relation to finances, and it can contribute to a lack of financial awareness. These behaviours have ripple effects on people's financial agency, access to resources, and relationships with services.

These challenges can present barriers to people with lived experience accessing funded support. We also know that people with lived experience are more likely to experience inequalities which can increase the likelihood of multiple negative life outcomes including poor mental health and which could be in part addressed through funded support. As such, the very support intended to address the inequalities that people registered with us may have faced, can be harder for them to access.

## Part two: Supporting equitable access to funded support

We know that difficulties accessing funded support are a particular area of concern for people we support. For example, critical feedback about difficulties accessing the Discretionary Fund has been a key theme in the feedback we have received over several years. We consistently receive feedback from people we support that being unable to access the Discretionary Fund, or waiting for decisions about the Discretionary Fund can evoke very difficult feelings. For example, people express feelings of frustration, mistrust, being uncared for and unimportant, and being treated differently to others in relation to these experiences.

People also share that this experience can generate or reinforce a power dynamic between the person seeking support and Future Pathways, or it can prompt people to feel a sense of unfairness when they see or hear that different people access different types of funded support through Future Pathways. This experience may be related to people's previous experiences of abuse or neglect which may have involved them being treated differently than others within care settings as children.

Support Coordinators also identified some key barriers that people can face when seeking to access funded support. They reflected that different people could have different understandings of the purpose and scope of the Discretionary Fund and the process of accessing it. They also noted that discussing the Discretionary Fund could affect the relationship between the person seeking support and the Support Coordinator.

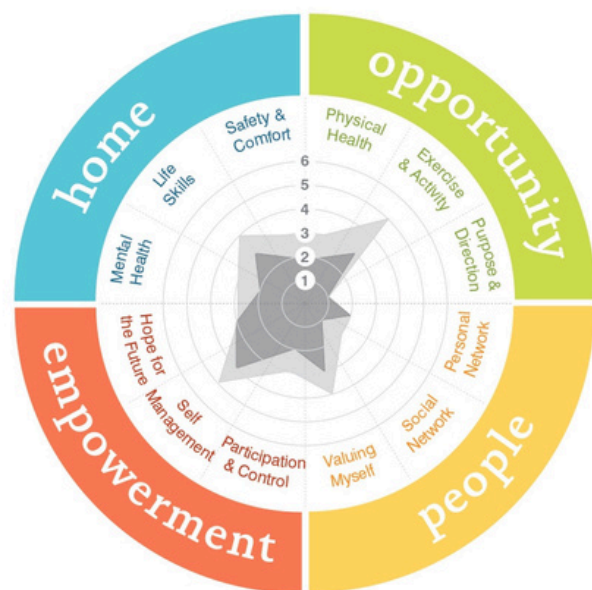
We are proactive about supporting equitable access to funded support by taking a trauma informed approach to this aspect of our support. We do this by:

- Being transparent about the purpose, scope and processes of accessing our funded support
- Evaluating our approach to funded support and its impact so we can learn and improve.
- Taking a relational approach to funded support

Our evaluations indicate that our approach is effective in supporting equitable access to funded support to progress their outcomes. Most people accessing Future Pathways are supported to access the Discretionary Fund to progress their outcomes and many people are supported to access Delivery Partner services to progress their outcomes. The number of times people access Discretionary Fund payments is highly variable as is the monetary value of the payments accessed. This indicates that people are supported to access funded support in a tailored way.

## Supporting equitable access to funded support

Our evaluation also clearly shows that people use funded support in ways which align broadly with the themes in people's outcomes identified in support planning conversations. We use the HOPE framework to analyse the outcomes that people identify in their support plans.



More than half of the outcomes people identify in support plans are about the Home area of their life. Another area of priority is Empowerment. In the samples of support plans we looked at, most commonly people identified outcomes around their mental health, safety and comfort, and self-management. You can read more about how we analyse the outcomes people identify with us in the Appendix of our full Meanings of Funded Support report.

We can see some patterns in how people use funded support as part of their journey with Future Pathways and these align with what we see in people's outcomes. For example, many people use the Discretionary Fund to progress outcomes around safety and comfort at home, and many people access Delivery Partner to seek their records. However, it is also clear that support has different meanings for each person.



## The impacts of funded support

Accessing funded support is an important part of most people's experience with Future Pathways. In their reviews, most people reflect that they experience a positive impact from accessing Future Pathways support. For most people, they experience a big impact from our support.

The feedback we receive suggests that funded support that is aligned with people's outcomes can support people to feel better in their mental health. In review conversations that we sampled, people described how accessing different types of funded support contributed to a reduction in feelings like anger, anxiety, frustration and overwhelm and an increase in feelings like enjoyment, freedom, confidence and improved self-esteem. For example, accessing mental health support from a Delivery Partner could help people to explore how their past experiences of trauma were affecting them now, and how they could apply coping strategies to manage this in their day to day lives.

We also found that people took steps to progress their outcomes having accessed funded support. For example, people reflected that they had participated more in their relationships with other people and services having accessed funded support. For example, accessing the Discretionary Fund to purchase an item such as a bicycle could lead to the person spending their time engaging in their hobby with friends or family members, or using this as a form of transport to access community groups. Notably, for some people, accessing the Discretionary Fund prompted them to feel more hopeful about their future.

There was some evidence that some types of funded support were correlated with some impacts. For example, our most recent evaluation found that there was, understandably, a correlation between accessing Delivery Partner support for counselling or psychological support and mental health benefits. But we also learned that there is no correlation between the cost of an item or service and the impact experienced. People access funded support of different monetary values, and many people reflected that they had experienced a 'big' impact from support regardless of the cost of support.

Importantly, we found that the relationship between the way funded support is used and the person's outcome is a determining factor in the impact the person experiences. People find funded support most impactful when the support aligns with their outcomes. And we find that in general, this is the case. This indicates that the impact people experience having accessed funded support is related to what the support means to the person, rather than the type or cost of the support itself.



**“It really was lifechanging. It is night and day compared with what my life was like. Now, I have someone on my side. Future Pathways helped me turn my life around. I started caring about myself, because someone else was caring about me.”**

**(Person supported by Future Pathways)**

## Conclusion

Since Future Pathways launched, we have learned that accessing funded support can be a complex, challenging experience for people with lived experience for many reasons. By looking closely at the feedback, we have received from people accessing our support we can see that being unable to access or having to wait to access Discretionary Fund support can be particularly difficult for people with lived experience.

In this report, we share what we have learned about navigating these complexities so that people can access the right support for them. We share what we have learned about the importance of taking a trauma informed and relational approach to supporting access to funded support. For example, being transparent about the purpose, scope and process of this aspect of our support and how this can help people to overcome the barriers to accessing funded support.

While barriers persist, our evaluations show that many people we support are supported to access funded support within the context of a relationship with their Support Coordinator. And we see that in general funded support is accessed in ways which align with the outcomes that we know are important to many people we support: gaining independence; feeling better in their mental health; and experiencing more safety and comfort at home.

One on hand, it is clear that the impact of our funded support is, like our support more broadly, unique to each person because it is guided by the outcomes each person identifies. On the other, we can see some patterns in the impact of funded support, namely that this aspect of our support can contribute to a change process that supports people to feel better in their mental health, safer and more comfortable in their homes and more independent.

## Our next steps

Writing this report has helped us identify some steps we can take to support people to access funded support in alignment with their outcomes and enhance the impact of this support.

Here are some of the steps we have already taken:

- 1 We refreshed our communications about our outcomes-focused approach to support and the Discretionary Fund.
- 2 We reviewed our approach to commissioning Delivery Partner support in 2023/24. We are now embedding our refreshed relational approach to Delivery Partner support.

Here are some of the steps we are taking now:

- 1 We are updating our approach to discussing personal outcomes with people accessing Future Pathways, and planning and reviewing support – including funded support – in a flexible and trauma informed way.
- 2 We are supporting Delivery Partners to share the impact of the support they provide more fully and regularly following the implementation of our refreshed approach to commissioning support.



Published December 2024