



what's the idea?

You can find this booklet online in different formats,
including audio and video versions.

Go to www.equalcare.coop/voices

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who are we?



We are the Equal Care Co-op (eccoo for short) – a new care and support platform co-op* owned by the people who receive support and those who give it.

With the help of digital technologies, and led by the local community, we will create a fair, relationship-centred service with opportunities for people receiving support to offer their skills, experience and support to others, either on a paid or voluntary basis.

* A **platform co-op** is a business that uses a computing platform to let people exchange goods and services. The co-op's members own the business, and can vote on how it is run.



Important note about this booklet

This is a vision that we are in the midst of creating – it is our direction of travel.

We have written it so that our members, our future members and our stakeholders (and anyone who's curious) can see what we're working towards and decide if they would like to join in.

To find out how far along we are, go to www.equalcare.coop/progress

the challenge

People access care and support in one of two ways.

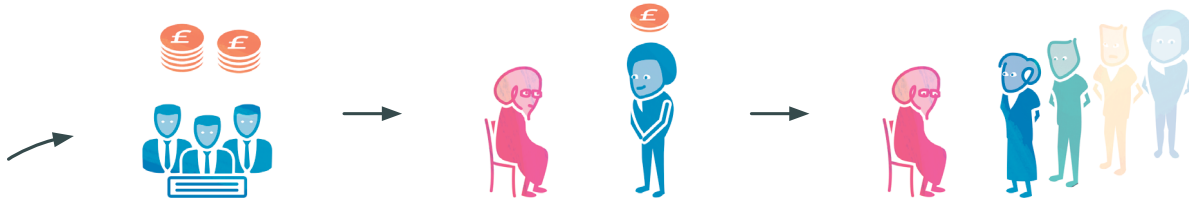
They pay for it themselves through their own funds or a personal budget. Or they get referred to a commissioned service by their social worker or health provider. Each route has its own challenges.

Personal Budgets

People go through a complex assessment process and are given a budget to pay for some or all of their support. There are many different types of personal budget. In essence though, they can choose a company to provide this or employ somebody directly...

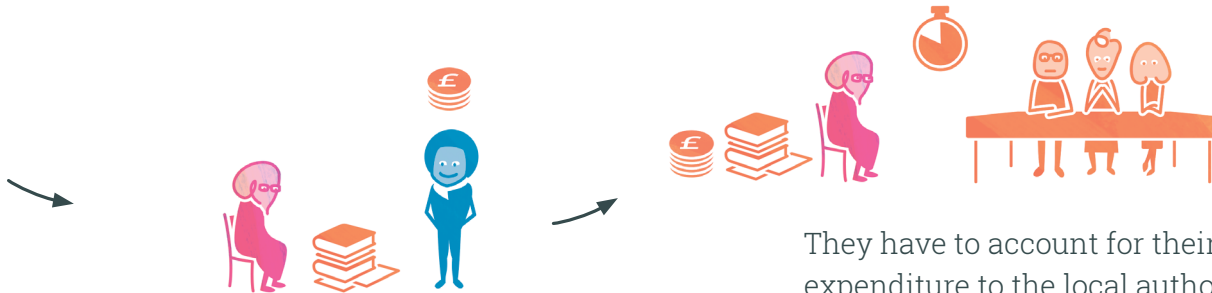


personal budgets



Private companies have high costs, pay the care worker minimum wage and don't allow people to choose who supports them.

Staff turnover is often high and last-minute changes are common.

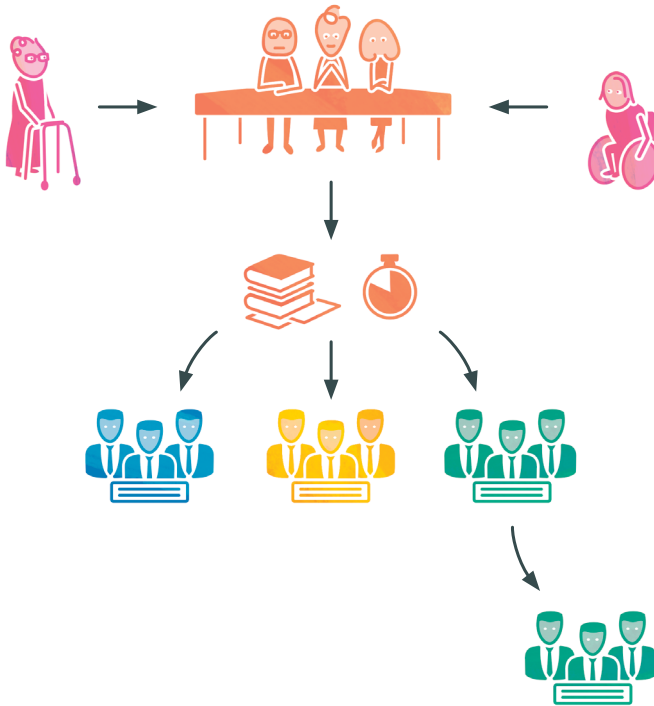


People who employ somebody directly have to manage everything themselves, including recruitment, payroll, contracts, rota and records.

They have to account for their expenditure to the local authority.

The care relationship is dominated by the bureaucracy created to support it.

the challenge



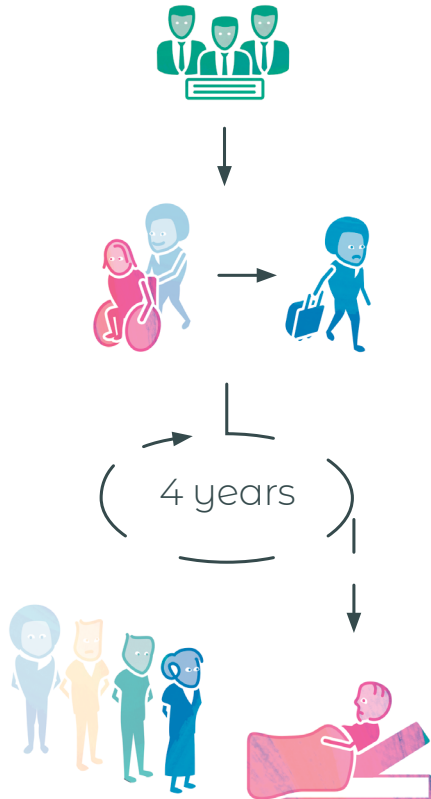
Block Contracts

Local authority commissioners want to procure a social care and support service. They ask some service users what they want it to look like.

They write a very long tender specification with a tight deadline.

The service goes out to tender and organisations compete to provide it.

The commissioners decide who wins the service. No one else sees the winning tender. Usually, no one sees the specification either.



The winning organisation restructures the service to meet their new budget.

Care workers, on very low wages, are assigned new job descriptions, often re-interviewed and now work for a new organisation. They are aligned with a new vision for the service which they had no role in shaping.

Morale is low and staff turnover is high. In a few years' time, when the contract runs out, the whole process happens again.

The most important people - the care worker and the person receiving support - have no real say in any of these decisions.

our approach is different



The most important relationship is between
the person receiving support and the person giving it.

This comes above all else.



Our co-operative is **owned by the people who receive and the people who give support**. They have real power over how the organisation is run and how the care and support takes place.

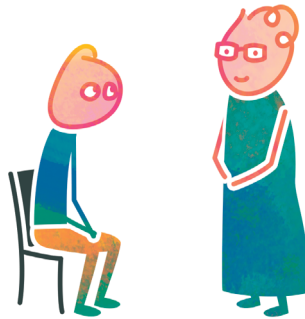
Caring is an abundant resource, not scarce, but belonging to us all. We celebrate the skills and expertise of people who receive care, creating the tools, support and culture to allow them to help others.



The technology we use is **designed by and with the people using it**. It is shaped to fit humans and to serve the people giving and getting the support. This even means not having to go near a computer.

We bring in **the whole community** - family, friends, neighbours, peers, advanced practitioners and health professionals - to give the people getting and giving the support the best chance at success.

So, what's the idea?



Well, there are five parts to it...



Choose

Caregivers and receivers choose one another to create lasting, respectful, quality care and support relationships.



Trust

People (givers and receivers) can trust in the quality of the support and feel safe. They keep control over and have ownership of their data.



Give

We give people receiving care the opportunities and support to help others and to be fairly rewarded for this work.



Ease

We remove administrative burdens for care workers and care receivers without compromising on choice, safety, personal autonomy or quality.

We give people the tools, the skills and the confidence to self-organise and co-ordinate how the support works.



Belong

We co-ordinate the kindness that already exists in communities by developing trusted circles of support around each person.

our service

The best, most consistent care and support relationships happen when people like, trust and respect one another. We create a relationship of equals, right from the start.

Each worker chooses who they support and each person chooses who supports them and how.

Choose the support

People needing support can choose every aspect of the care, including the type of support, the person giving it, when and where that support takes place and whether to end or change the support at any time.

They may also choose an activity rather than a person, such as a facilitated walking group or arts session.

Choose the work

People giving support can choose when to work and when to stop, making it fit in properly to their lives and protecting them from burn-out.

This even includes choosing their preferred employment basis, ranging from independent self-employed work to minimum hours contracts through to full-time employment.



Matching

Both care worker and the person looking for support are matched across three areas:

1. Practicalities (availability, location and professional experience).
2. Interests + activities.
3. Outcomes they're looking for (like independence, social connection, new skills).

Individuals and their families can choose support online, through the post or over the phone. After a trial, each person says whether they wish to continue with the support.

People can also decide to receive support from trusted individuals who have experience of similar conditions or situations as them.

our service

Trust is essential for any relationship to work well. People receiving the service and their families need to know that they'll be getting safe, excellent support. Caregivers need to know that they have the support and backup to work safely and play to their strengths.

People looking for support or those doing so on their behalf decide which tier of worker they want:

Tier One requires identity and Disclosure & Barring Service checks, qualifications and experience verification and references. This tier lets new workers onto the platform.



Tier Two also requires an application form, a competency-based interview and a skills test. This tier opens up more work opportunities.



Feeling safe

Both the care worker and the person supported need to feel safe. This starts with understanding people's concerns. Each person chooses what will work well for them, such as getting a phone call before a visit or seeing a photo of who they'll be supporting.

Supportive reviews and learning

Reviews will be centred on reflective practice, learning and growth, given by a trained peer from another team. The person getting support chooses whether and when their support is reviewed. They also decide how much they would like to participate in the review.



our service

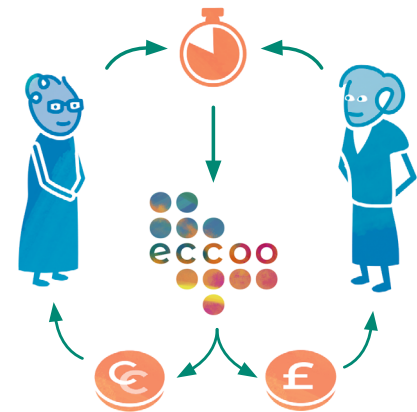
Giving is a natural part of being human. If you get stuck in a role where you're only receiving support and services from others this can make you more unwell.



Peer support will be embedded into the service, with people who receive care also being supported to offer their lived experience to help others. They can be paid for this or volunteer.

The platform will encourage and reward voluntary support hours offered by carers, users or family members. Hours are recorded and achievements published, even if no money is exchanged. People will be able to earn Care Coins that can be used to buy support hours later on. These hours could be for themselves or a gift to others.

They will be supported to do this by their care worker (who will be supported and trained by the service) and by other peers. These opportunities are integral, available to all and written into support planning.



our service

Care provision is littered with form-filling, paperwork, administration and logistics. We ease the way by using technology to smooth these paths and putting co-ordination power into the hands of the people doing the work.



Many ways to say one thing

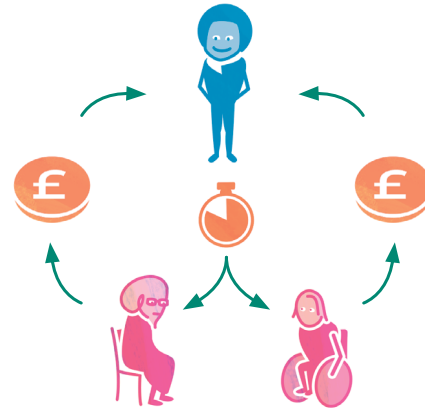
It's not all about typing up care and support records. We'll use diverse ways to get information into the same place:

Care workers can choose to use writing, speech, photos and icons to record common activities.



Getting from A to B

Arranging appointments and getting from place to place takes time. Automatic appointment scheduling based on journey times and traffic data, mileage tracking, displaying the upcoming to-do list, sending text reminders and late alerts are just a few ways to make this easier.



Sharing funds

People can easily pool their budgets and share worker hours, halving or even quartering their costs. This offers a simple, accountable way to increase the number of professional support hours they benefit from, make new friends and try out new activities.

our service

Teams around each person

Once more than one person supports someone regularly they become a team.

Each team uses online tools which centre around each individual with that person (or someone they nominate) in charge.

People offering volunteer and peer support are also part of the team.

We help people to share caring responsibilities instead of everything falling on one person.



Each team member has different responsibilities - the person getting support (and anyone they nominate) controls how these are shared out.



A **supported person's** **sister** might help him manage his **finances**, but he might choose to mark details of his personal care as intimate.



On the other hand his **doctor and personal assistant** will get access to **care records**, but won't know about budgets and employment costs.



Other **people** might volunteer on the team and need access to **schedules** from closer circles.



Finally, a **concerned neighbour** may also be connected, but only as an emergency contact, or kept in the loop with important news.

Different circles can overlap, and care givers and receivers can be members of **more than one team**.



Supporting workers

Having a supportive, empathetic network of peers is fundamental to wellbeing and stimulates hope, empathy and commitment to the work.

Using the principles of self-governance and team autonomy, we will enable workers to co-ordinate the support they offer without constantly referring decisions up a management chain.

Care and support workers will lead on coaching and mentoring each other, enabling more honest feedback and understanding of the issues related to their work.

Group and one to one sessions will focus on workers wellbeing, creative problem solving and reflective practice. We will offer qualifications and training in health and social care, digital inclusion, peer support, self-managing teams and person-centred and co-operative ways of working.

People receiving support are often the best teachers and trainers in their specific conditions and experience of services. We will support them to deliver or co-deliver training both online and in our community.



the world we want



...where people receiving care and support have full choice and control over what that support looks like, how it's given and who by...

...where they get the opportunities to share, give and earn for their skills, experience and expertise in helping others.



Emma Back - set up a community-based charity, tendered for, co-produced and designed social care services: founded Equal Care Co-op.



Kate Hammon - ran and transformed a small social enterprise working with ex-offenders: project and product management.



Amber Wright - leads a team of Personal Assistants, designed digital tools for support. Award-winning person-centred working: facilitation, training, membership.



Fran Watson - runs Hebden Care, giving independent support. She managed the Moving into Work project for the social enterprise, Kerbside (Calderdale): mentoring independent workers and service design.



Kenny Lee - has experience of both giving and receiving care and support, activist for human and non-human rights, equalities and rainbow campaigner: social media, peer support, confidence building.



We have four member categories:



Supported members



Advocate members



Investor members

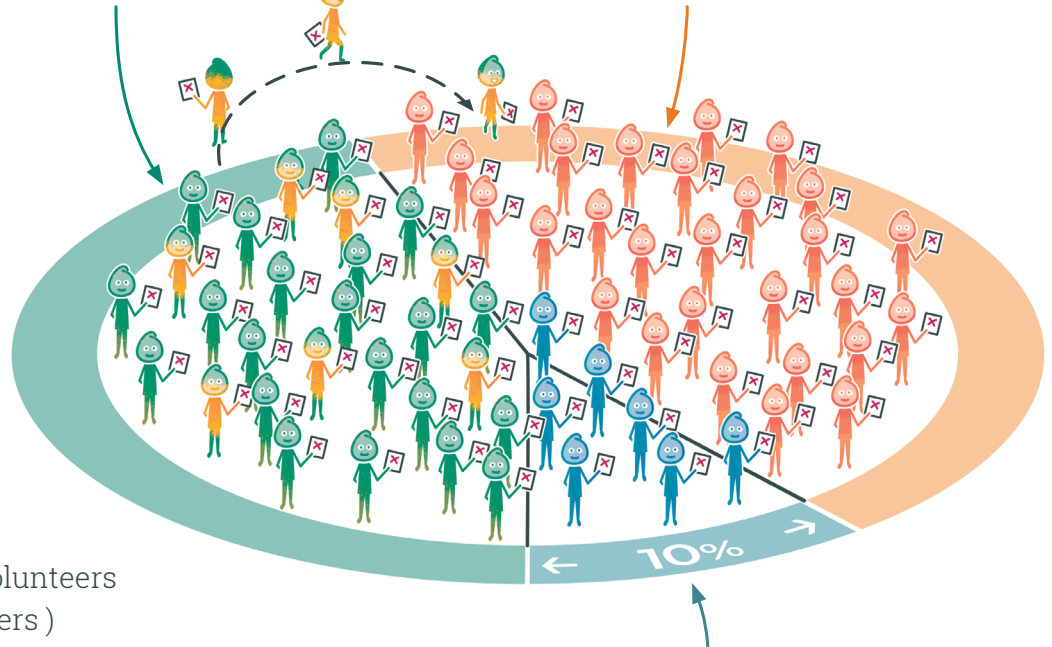


Worker members

(paid workers, volunteers and peer supporters)

Supported members and advocates...

...can become worker members



Each member gets one vote  but...

...investor votes are weighted so that they only count for 10% of the final vote.

We're just getting started, and will continue to apply to funds and foundations for help, but we already have a lot of organisations to thank...

Co-operatives UK are a big supporter, helping us with advice, donations and investment.

We were part of the first ever platform co-operative accelerator – **UnFound** – funded by the **Co-op Group**, run by **Co-operatives UK** and **Stir to Action**.

Ayup development agency are leading on our prototype design and launch of the minimum viable product over 2018.

We have been given in-kind support by the **Co-operative Bank**, the **Ad:Venture Programme**, **Co-Lab Agency**, **Community Shares**, **Co-op Culture**, **Social Value UK** and **Sociocracy for All**.

Our **Advice Circle** includes co-operative expertise, software engineers, clinical governance and chartered accountancy.

The Paul Hamlyn Foundation are providing grant funding to develop the prototype and we are on the second cohort of the **Nesta ShareLab** fund covering feasibility, operation costs and service design throughout 2018.

Finally, **The Reach Fund** is funding the development and launch of our **Christmas Crowdfunder** followed by our **Pioneer Community Share Offer** in Spring 2019.

We hope to have many more to thank soon!

become part of the story

We have had an amazing experience so far and have attracted support and interest from many people. But we need more to get it all to happen. There are four ways you can help...

join us

Jump in with both feet and become a member (and shareholder) of the Equal Care Co-op. Some membership types allow you to sign up straightaway, others take more commitment. To find out more go to www.equalcare.coop/join

invest in us

We need financial support to launch, develop and grow. If you want to contribute to eccoo's success, either through a donation or an investment offering a reasonable return, go to www.equalcare.coop/invest

work with us

This covers both volunteering and paid roles. If you love what we're doing and want to make a real difference in the social care sector, go to www.equalcare.coop/work

follow our story

To learn what's happening now and what's planned, or to sign up to our email newsletter, go to www.equalcare.coop/progress

Say hello@equalcare.coop or find us on social media by searching for "equalcarecoop"



Equal Care Co-op, also known as eccoo, is a registered co-operative society no. 4453