Person centred care has become a key element of health policy and recent health reform. Person centred care principles aim to move the conversations and focus between health professionals and individuals, from “What’s the matter with you”? or “How can I help you”? to “What matters to you”?

Person centred care is used to describe different principles and activities. One definition of person centred care is: “A basic philosophy of care, centred around the individual – in which the needs and resources of the individual define the process. Individuals are supported and encouraged to make informed decisions about their treatment and health management; it is a process that is not only responsive to the individual’s physical abilities and medical needs, but also to the individual’s social and psychological abilities, preferences and lifestyle”. (source: E. Rasmussen et al. 2014. Person Centred Care: Co-creating a healthcare sector for the future. DNV GL and Monday Morning/Sustainia).

The difficulty in definition is in part because person centred care is still an evolving and emergent area, and because person centred care depends on the needs, circumstances and preferences of the individuals receiving care.

PRINCIPLES
The Health Foundation has identified a framework of four principles which underpin person centred care (Figure 3.1):

- Affording people dignity, compassion and respect
- Offering coordinated care, support or treatment
- Offering personalised care, support or treatment
- Supporting people to recognise and develop their own strengths and abilities to enable them to live an independent and fulfilling life

Figure 3.1: The Health Foundation’s Four Principles of Person Centred Care (reproduced with permission)
Person centred care is a relationship in which health care professionals and patients work together to:

- Understand what is important to the person
- Make decisions about their care and treatment
- Identify and achieve their goals

When care is person centred it will involve a combination of these principles.

**APPROACHES TO PERSON CENTRED CARE**

**Approaches to person centred care include:**

**Co-production**
Co-production enables citizens and professionals to share power and work together in equal partnership, to create opportunities for people to access support when they need it and to contribute to social change. [View more information on case studies in Wales.](#)

**Shared decision making**
Shared decision making supports individuals to make a specific decision. For example, to choose between different types of surgery, or take a course of medication. It can often involve decision support materials that are designed to assist individuals in assessing their options.

**Making Choices Together** is a movement to encourage open conversations between patients and their Clinicians to make decisions together about the right care for the patient, informed by good evidence and responsive to the needs and wishes of the patient.

**Self management support**
Self management support helps individuals to develop and increase their capacity, knowledge, confidence, and self-efficacy to manage their own health and wellbeing and/or recover from an episode of ill health. The model in Wales is primarily a patient based model that seeks to enable patients through individual or group based education. [Education Programme for Patients (EPP) Cymru offers a range of health and wellbeing courses and workshops for people living with, or caring for, someone with a health condition.](#)

Many of the staff and volunteers who are involved with EPP Cymru in Wales have personal experience of either living with, or caring for someone with a health condition. Find out more on the [EPP Cymru website.](#)

**Health literacy**
Identifying the personal characteristics and social resources needed for individuals and communities to access, understand, appraise and use information and services to make informed decisions about their own health and care. [Find out more](#)

**Service user feedback**
Putting in place a range of methods to understand what it feels like to be a service user and using that feedback to improve services, experiences and an individual’s care.
WHY IS PERSON CENTRED CARE SO IMPORTANT?
Many people want to play a more active role in their health care, and there is growing evidence that approaches to person centred care such as shared decision making and self management support can improve a range of factors, including patient experience, quality of care and health outcomes. The active involvement of patients is an essential element of improving and transforming outpatient services. Examples include the following:

■ Supporting patients with long-term conditions to manage their health and care can improve clinical outcomes. When people play a more collaborative role in managing their health and care, they are more likely to follow their treatment plans.

■ Patients who have the opportunity and support to make decisions about their care and treatment in partnership with health professionals are more satisfied with their care, are more likely to choose treatments based on their values and preferences rather than those of their clinician, and tend to choose less invasive and less costly treatments.

■ Individuals who have more knowledge, skills and confidence to manage their health and health care, are more likely to engage in positive health behaviours and to have better health outcomes.

■ Person centred care is good for health care professionals too. As patient engagement increases, staff performance and morale see a corresponding increase.

Care that is person centred should also represent better value for money because it ensures that services are built on the needs and preferences of the people who use them, rather than on the convenience of providers.