

# Changing Futures

— Stoke-on-Trent —

## Case Study: Flexible Care Partnerships

### Background

Adrian\* is registered blind and has a history of drug and alcohol use, he has been street homeless and sofa surfing for the majority of his adult life which has resulted in Adrian being financially exploited. Adrian has a previous offending history and has served a custodial sentence before, he also has physical health issues alongside a mental health diagnosis of psychosis.

Due to his mental health difficulties, substance dependence and visual impairment the risk of Adrian being exploited are significant. These factors also act as barriers for Adrian to live independently as things like shopping, cooking and personal care are particularly difficult for him, meaning he has eligible care and support needs.

At the time that changing futures became involved, Adrian was stuck living with someone who was taking all of his money and in a house that was very risky due to the people visiting the property. Adrian had the clothes he stood up in, was frightened, but didn't know how to get out.

Adrian has spent many years stuck within a cycle of addiction and homelessness and the risks to him were increasing. It was really important for Adrian to get the right help and support to enable him to live a safe and happy life and to rebuild relationships with his family.

### Barriers Identified

- Due to the risks associated with the property Adrian was living at, support agencies were struggling to effectively engage with Adrian which meant he was not receiving support for his drug and alcohol use or getting the help he needs to properly look after himself day to day.
- Adrian was subject to financial exploitation, but deemed/assessed by professionals to have the capacity to make his own decisions and manage his own finances.
- Due to Adrian's care and support needs as well as his previous behaviors, housing providers were reluctant to provide suitable accommodation for him.
- Adrian does not have a bank account as he does not have any ID.

### What did we do?

Multiple referrals were submitted to supported housing providers for suitable accommodation and through persistent and assertive advocacy a bed space was identified and an offer of accommodation was made. Initially it was difficult to speak to Adrian on his own to facilitate getting him out of the property he was staying in. The supported housing provider however was understanding and agreed to keep the bed space offered open, giving us the necessary time to engage with Adrian away from the people at his property. After some time Adrian's social worker

was able to do this and Adrian broke down, disclosing all the abuse that he had been subjected to. Changing Futures, the housing provider and social worker reacted immediately and supported Adrian to quickly and safely move into his new accommodation making use of his personal budget to meet his basic needs. Weekly MDTs were held initially to allocate tasks between professionals and to ensure that nothing was missed. A care package was put in place straight away to ensure that Adrian could live independently with the right support. Adaptations were made to the new property to meet Adrian's needs including an electronic fob system to get in and out of his room.

A care package was put in place for two hours a day at a time that was suitable for Adrian which includes support to collect his methadone prescription daily, shopping, laundry, cooking, visiting his family, attending the gym and going swimming. In addition to this STR workers were sourced to support further with accessing local wellbeing services and community activities.

Adrian's benefits had previously been paid into someone else's bank who was taking all of his money. Adrian was supported to address this and the personal budget was used to fund food and clothing in the interim. The personal budget was also used to purchase a talking watch and clock, a TV (for documentaries) and a radio and headphones as he enjoys listening to music.

All the services involved with Adrian now take an assertive outreach approach to which he responds really well and fully engages. The partnership communicate regularly via email to ensure that any issues are dealt with quickly and effectively.

### **Outcome**

Adrian was supported out of a dangerous situation/environment where he was sofa surfing and being financially exploited, into supported housing that is safe and able to meet Adrian's needs.

Without support from Changing Futures Adrian would likely still be sofa surfing, stuck in a cycle of addiction and homelessness with poor physical and mental health and not having contact with his family.

Adrian now has his own bank account and is being supported to manage his finances. He is engaging well with the support he has in place and has not used drugs since being rehoused.

Adrian now has regular contact with his family and is attending a coffee morning on Fridays where he is able to spend time with other people who have lived experience.

Adrian attends his own Multi Disciplinary Team meetings and is taking an active role in setting his goals and actions going forwards, he plans to continue to access support from drug and alcohol services and to continue to rebuild his relationship with his family with a view to move closer to them in the future.

## Learning

The flexibility and understanding shown from the housing provider that accommodated Adrian was key to allow professionals to find the right time to safely engage with him, without this it is likely the bed space would have been closed and the move to appropriate housing may not have happened.

This case shows that persistent advocacy from professionals working in partnership is effective in achieving a positive outcome for our customers, and that in some scenarios an assertive outreach approach is more appropriate and effective than the more traditional approach of the customer coming to the service. We recognise that for services to adopt these approaches having the time to do so is a determining factor, smaller caseloads therefore can help to enable this.

There are many ways a personal budget can be applied to supporting a person, in this case it was able to bridge the gap between Adrian leaving his previous property and moving into his new one to meet his basic needs in terms of food, clothing etc. whilst professionals worked with Adrian to address the financial exploitation he was experiencing. Through the personal budget Changing Futures were also able to help make Adrian's new property 'a home' by providing basic things which allowed him to function and be comfortable, avoiding having to move into a completely bare property which may have resulted in Adrian not wishing to stay.

The care providers in this case have shown that it is possible to work with people experiencing multiple disadvantages, and we have seen the positive impact this has had for Adrian, however we know that historically experiencing multiple disadvantage, or being deemed to be a complex case, can act as a barrier to sourcing appropriate care in the community.

\* Customer name has been changed to protect identity.