

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE O&S COMMITTEE

18th December 2018

THE NEW SOCIAL WORK MODEL IN BIRMINGHAM

6 Months in the Life of 3 Conversations

'I want to thank you from the bottom of my heart, when I found out I couldn't stop crying' Mr C's Grandmother.

Mr C left college with certificates in catering but was not able to find work. Mr C is a young man with Autism and from college he moved to day care. Mr C was not happy at his day care centre. Alison an innovator from Northfield, using a conversational approach met with Mr C and explored with him what he wanted to do, what support was available from his family and friends, what he enjoyed and what he was interested in. Alison found out that Mr C had enjoyed his time at college studying catering and had a passion for Birmingham City FC. In the spirit of doing things differently Alison contacted the Corporate Catering Team at Birmingham City. To cut a long story short, Alison supported Mr C at his interview where he was offered a contract to work on their catering team. Mr C has been allocated a mentor and ASC&H are offering training on working with someone with Autism. Mr C's uncle has agreed to drive him to work. Mr C's proudest moment so far was receiving his Birmingham City ID Card with his photo on it! He is looking forward to spending his wages!

This is one of an increasing number of stories coming from our social work innovation teams using the 3 conversations framework showing how they are achieving positive outcomes with citizens by connecting them to their communities.

Birmingham has a clear commitment to Prevention First with the aim to build off people's strengths and assets as well as connecting them to their community. We are 6 months into the roll out of the new social work framework which includes 3 conversations, Family Group Conferencing, Local Area Co-ordination and the commissioning led Neighbourhood Networks. These combined approaches have been chosen following a research and evidence based review of what has worked in other local authorities.

BASW Challenge

Over the years social work nationally, in response to legislative changes and legal challenges has developed complex systems and processes that social workers have to follow. In May 2018, the British Association of Social Workers (BASW) completed a survey of social workers and identified that across local authorities workers spent 80% of their time following these systems and processes with only 20% of their time working with citizens, families and their communities. They threw out the challenge to LA's to reverse this. Our starting point in this challenge is utilising 3 conversations where we focus on what is important to the person rather than completing the same full eligibility assessment with everyone.

Constituency model

We moved to Constituency based teams and launched the new model with 2 innovation teams (Hodge Hill and Hall Green) in March 2018. In July a further constituency team (Erdington) and 4 small specialist teams (Sensory, Transitions, Community Opportunities Review and North Mental Health) joined the innovation. We have just entered Phase 3 with a further 6 teams (EAB North, EAB South, Ladywood, Northfield, Yardley, Selly Oak) joining at the end of October 2018.

The Model

Conversation 1. Listen and connect. Understand what really matters to the person. Connect to resources so people can get on with their lives independently

Conversation 2. Work intensively with people in crisis. What needs to change urgently to help someone regain control of their life? When crisis is over return to Conversation 1.

Conversation 3. Build a good life – what does this look like? What assets, strengths, resources inc. a personal budget does someone have to support that chosen life? How do these need to be organised?

To date across all teams there have been 925 Conversation 1's. Of these 77% were resolved at conversation 1.

Huddle Meetings

Built into the new framework is the importance of a team support and challenge meeting. Innovators discuss what has gone well, what has been challenging, knowledge sharing about the communities and stories of what they have done differently.

Know your Community

To enable innovators to resolve situations by linking people to their community they have to know what is available. In each constituency Birmingham has commissioned a Neighbourhood Network Lead Organisation who is working closely with their local social work team and mapping what is currently available and identifying gaps. Spitfire NNS has commented that "doing things new or differently always take time and is about change. I am really pleased that working with Erdington Social Work team has been exceptionally good, we have started to develop a strong professional relationship that enables us to make a huge impact on the citizens we are working with. I believe we have collectively started a journey of Change which will have a huge impact on citizens of not only Erdington but the city of Birmingham. I am looking forward to the future with optimism. "

Concentrate of the Persons Strengths

It is clear that getting away from a prescriptive eligibility assessment with a question driven discussion and you start a conversation with what a person's strengths are, this gives a richer discussion. People are more relaxed and comfortable if you focus on what is important to them. A manager in the Sensory Team was told 'This conversation has been much easier to concentrate on the couple of issues that I was experiencing and not having to go through a list of 'irrelevant' questions – I even asked for the worker to call back for a conversation soon!"

The approach is not about focusing on eligibility and budget but about identifying what is important to the person. For example Mrs A who had moved from hospital into one of the Enhanced Assessment Beds felt comfortable enough during the conversation about a move to long term care to say 'You do not know what it feels like to not be wanted by your daughter. She does not want me home.' The worker was able to support her in a conversation with her family so the move went well.

No waiting list

People who contact ASC&H are in a crisis and are seeking support with an issue which is important to them. Our aim to start working with people as quickly as possible in a way that people are not telling their story to lots of different worker. The Sensory Team have changed how they undertake duty. Social workers start conversation 1 in duty using strengths conversations and are finding using the conversation approach focusing on what is important to the person rather than the eligibility

assessment that most conversations are resolved quickly. Workers continue to work with everyone that they started a conversation with on duty. This approach has reduced the waiting list by half and 90% of been resolved at conversation 1.

No handovers

We are moving away from signposting to introducing as information given is often not used. In Hall Green Mr J a young man who had a brain injury following an accident was referred by his GP for day care as he was not going out, over eating, he had lost contact with his friends and becoming depressed. In conversation Mr J revealed that he wanted to meet people and get fit. The innovator identified a local gym, took Mr J to meet the team and look round. Mr J started at the gym, who provided him with support and he soon was eating less, talking to people using the gym and developing a new group of friends.

When additional specialist support may be required previously we would have made a referral. For example occupational therapy colleagues attend huddle meeting and working together so that joint visits can be planned.

Cultural Change

Moving to prevention, community first had required a significant change in focus at all level. Moving from the eligibility led assessment has supported people to live better lives and moved from the traditional service led approach. Workers across the teams say they are enjoying being at work because:

“Instead of just signposting we have been linking people up”

“It’s empowering”

“I’ve enjoyed being able to joint work with OTs”

“I’ve enjoyed the networking”

“I’ve felt like I’m part of a team again and going out researching”

Contacts: Fiona Mould, Principal Social Worker
Pauline Mugridge, Assistant Director (Interim)