

Changing Futures

— Stoke-on-Trent —

Entrenched rough sleeping

Background

The customer was experiencing entrenched rough sleeping and substance misuse following a parental bereavement in June 2022. This led to street homelessness from the family home. They were under financial protection from 2022 and had persistent issues with substance-related debt and the impact of threats of violence towards him.

The customer was accessing monies on a daily arrangement with financial protection via appointee and presented daily while rough sleeping at the Civic Centre. Lee Dale, Recovery Coordinator, became involved in September 2022. Richard Walley, Case Coordinator, was allocated in March 2023.

A case was opened with adult social care and a social worker was allocated from March 2022.

Throughout this time the customer was also verified and engaged with The Rough Sleepers Team (Brighter Futures)

Client Goals

The customer was focused on substance misuse treatment but was aware of limited support for monkey dust. He thought if he used heroin, he could get on an opiate replacement treatment therapy that would also halt his monkey dust use. His goal was to live an abstinence-based life and ultimately wanted to be rehoused in his birth town of Weston Coyney.

He also wants to be reconnected with siblings both that he grew up with and those that went into care at an early age.

The customer also wants to gain GCSE level qualifications including Maths and English.

Barriers Identified

Persistent substance use and accumulation of debt related to this.

Sporadic engagement and periods of him going off grid. This was due to him avoiding debtors around the community and would often be observed very anxious and conscious of these members of the community. When accessing monies from Civic Centre he would often be followed by debtors or debtors already waiting at the Civic Centre. This would lead to difficulties for reception staff and in extreme circumstances police would be called by staff.

Working with him was difficult for individual staff members as the risk of his debtors towards them was noted. Also lack of suitable accommodation and his lack of ability in managing congregate living environments and the communities within them due to constant debt accumulation and the difficulties this imposed.

Outputs

We worked with him to record specific debts and look at ways he could pay these off. Richard Walley supported with accessing the funds and allocating those to him, with each debt put into individual envelopes so this could be manageable to him. He was introduced to the Expert Citizens community space where he could be engaged easier by services including drug and alcohol service in a safe environment.

Historically he had a bedspace at the Lifehouse but was unable to manage his financial difficulties with debts and would often choose to rough sleep in Stoke to avoid these. Changing Futures advocated for him to gain a bedspace at 90 Hope Street which seemed more suitable due to being a smaller space with less residents. He still found it difficult in this accommodation and through constructive MDTs alongside multiple agencies an offer from Brighter Futures was to move him to a move on placement at The New Hope service which was an even smaller space with 7 beds. Therefore the staff to client ratio meant he would get more intensive support and observation. This led to him receiving further Brighter Futures support through the Assertive Casework Team with an allocated worker Lucy. During this entire period the possibilities of recovery and rehab were also conversed to him, also the Expert Citizens peer community made recovery possibilities visible to him. This was a joint effort from case worker, peer support community and brighter futures staff and CDAS workers.

Outcomes

As a result of the accommodation change to brighter futures together with the multi-agency wrap-around support, while working with peer communities at Expert Citizens he became more stable and more content with a positive outlook on a future without substances. He engaged with research activity at Expert Citizens and would attend group bowling and day trips with them.

Constant communication from Richard, was made with the Carpenters Arms rehab facility and a manager would attend MDTs who reached out to learn more about the substance monkey dust from the multi-agency team. Eventually after assessment and continuous communication with him and the team, he was finally offered a placement where he is currently. He has completed phase one successfully and is now in phase two within the main community house. He is engaging with education workshops alongside personal development and recovery focused activities. He has communicated via phone call to us this past week to report that he feels good and is playing golf and volunteering also. He states he'd like to live in the area around Loughborough for a further two years and has a long-term plan he feels is achievable.

Impact

Key learning has been the persistence of support from all agencies that remains continuous alongside constantly having the visual of the possibility of leading an abstinent life with positive relationships from the peer recovery community demonstrated.

Accommodation barriers were overcome through multi-agency wrap around support. Patience was demonstrated by all with continuous advocacy and having full faith in him that the right time and opportunities would come eventually.

Because of the amount of time spent with him by all agencies, this meant not one individual agency needed to be providing support alone. This then meant that agencies could provide their support elsewhere with their current caseloads. Police involvement ceased when he was no longer accessing the Civic Centre becoming very limited and only when safeguarding concerns arose from threats to him through debts.

RST time was freed up due to the lack of need to engage him on the street.

The customer being in rehab means that no sessions with drug and alcohol services are needed currently.

Staff time is now greatly reduced across all services involved.