Northampton: Headway case study 3

Talking Heads

Headway Northampton hosted two *Working together for change* workshops at its centre on the outskirts of Northampton in April 2010. This helped our community to engage with the project, which involved working together with commissioners, staff from our service and other local providers to understand what was working and not working in people's lives.

The majority of the people we support engaged in the workshops were people with acquired brain injury. During the workshops we all worked together looking at the reviews of 40 people across two Headway organisations, including ours, to hear what themes were coming from people's reviews. The reviews themselves were not focussed just on our services, but much more broadly on what was working and not working for people and what they wanted for the future.

One of the strongest messages which came up was that people said they wanted:

"care that is about me."

People said they sometimes felt staff and carers didn't see them enough as individuals and they sometimes didn't understand well enough how their lives were affected by their condition.

When we looked at how we could address the problem, people said they wanted to be involved in creating new training materials that illustrated how treating each person as an individual and listening to what was important to them as well as understanding their medical needs could help ensure people got supported in the right way.
At the centre, we already had a video artist working with some of the people we support, one of them suggested that we could develop a training DVD hosted by members themselves.

Following the workshop, we invested in some new equipment and began undertaking person-centred reviews. We came up with the tagline 'Talking Heads'. The feedback we've had from the people we support has been outstanding:

"Being recorded while doing the review does not bother me."

"It is a better way to do the one page review as it is less formal."

"It is about me and my needs."

"Since my personal centred review I feel I now get more support and good things have happened in my live."

"I can say what I want without feeling I am hurting anybody."
About us

Headway Northampton is a Specialist Social and Therapeutic centre for people who have sustained traumatic or acquired brain injury. We offer specialist, social and therapeutic activities on a daily basis.

Our facilities are provided in a safe and pleasant environment. This environment encourages self-development for the brain injured person, and helps to maintain any rehabilitation that has already been achieved. All of this in turn improves the quality of life to the brain injured person, gives a sense of purpose and belonging, and provides much needed respite and support for carers and relatives.

Services we provide for adults between the ages of 16 - 70 are:

- referrals taken from all sources.
- individual assessments.
- structured programmers for all Service Users.
- social and therapeutic workshops.
- in-house hospitality and dining area.
- individual dietary needs met where possible.
- monitoring of certain medical conditions.
- support and advice for brain injured persons, relatives and carers.
- listening ear.
- signposting to and liaising with other agencies.
- liaising with other agencies on behalf of the service user when requested.

Website: [http://www.headwaynorthampton.org.uk/](http://www.headwaynorthampton.org.uk/)

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What people told us

We used the *Working together for change* process in April 2010 to work in partnership with local commissioners, other providers and some of the people we support to look at information from people's reviews to see what it told us about our service and about what was important to people. People told us:

"I want to have support that's about me."

"I want more specialist support."

When we looked together in detail at why people were saying these things, it was clear that people felt they wanted to be more directly involved in how staff were trained to support them. They wanted us to find ways of supporting them to direct the kind of support they were receiving.

There have been some findings from the Person Centred Planning (PCP) process and we have taken on board the comments from both professionals and service users and their families.

Here is some of the feedback from people that took part in the pilot:

"Being recorded while doing the review does not bother me."

"It is a better way to do the one page review as it is less formal."

"It can be tiring because I have to think really hard."

"It is about me and my needs."

"Since my personal centred review I feel I now get more support and good things have happened in my live."
"I can say what I want without feeling I am hurting anybody."

Feedback from staff has been very positive:

"The process works better with a one page review."

"It has made me more aware of the service user's vulnerability and needs outside of Headway Northampton."

"Without an audience within PCR the service users are much more willing to give information about their lives."

The Talking Heads project is a more relaxed process, the recordings made can then be used to show other members of staff, as part of their "in-house training". This helps everyone to be more aware of any problems and allows the service user to have more input.

Margot the Manager said:

"I will be using one page reviews more often, particularly with those service users that have very complex needs. This means that any action plan can monitored and adapted quickly if necessary."
What we did

We commissioned a sessional artist who was already working with people at our centre to develop a training DVD with our service users. People volunteered to have their person-centred reviews recorded on video and developed into a training pack. We adopted a simple review process, asking the key questions we had used for the *Working together for change* process - what was working and not working in people's lives and what was important to them in the future. We asked people's permission to use this information in the new training pack. People told us they liked this way of being engaged in the training as face-to-face training was difficult for them. Capturing a person-centred approach in this way ensured that they always had a direct input into what people were learning about supporting them every time training was delivered.

We combined the videos we captured with the traditional training material we had from National Headway into a new training package and launched this with staff and carers in December 2010.

After the initial training, we evaluated it and decided to design a booklet based around Dr Beth Mount's findings, to use for the person-centred reviews with our service users.

We began completing the person-centred reviews, but it quickly became apparent that although the booklet we had designed was comprehensive, it needed some adapting. Service users found the review process too long, and it was too difficult for them to concentrate.

When relatives and others were present for the reviews, the service users that took part told us that they were uncomfortable sharing their true feelings, and they did not want to hurt anyone's feelings.
We adapted the booklet into a one page review which has worked much better, and we are now in the process of completing these with all of our service users, not just those that were involved in the pilot.
## Outcomes

The training package is still evolving and we want to continue to find ways of including people in its design and delivery. So far we think we have already achieved some useful outcomes for people:

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<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Outcome</th>
<th>Measure</th>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Checking improvements in people's lives and capturing themes for people.</td>
<td>Developed person-centred approaches for reviews. Adopting one page reviews. Tools working in practice, more successful than previous tools. Adapted an approach to keep people's engagement to ensure process is meaningful.</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>Raising awareness of head injuries and good practice in ways of working with people.</td>
<td>Training pack developed with video of outcome based reviews. Eight video reviews initially.</td>
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