

This document has been authored and co-produced with
Kate Linsky, Mental Health Programme Lead, NDTi

Cover design influenced by Craftivist movement.

©2017 TLAP & NDTi

CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	2
What this paper is about	2
Background	3
The future	4
THE JOURNEY FROM DAY CENTRE TO SOCIAL BROKERAGE	5
Change	6
Making connections	7
The values	8
Wider social influence	9
Citizen's recovery	13
Leadership	15
THE FUTURE	17
Needs and Wellbeing Assessment	17

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This is a case study about Coventry City Council's award-winning Pod. It is written for everyone out there trying to make mental health services a better experience for people. That includes NHS and/or local authority commissioners, managers and staff working in provider settings. And, of course, people with lived experience who are pressing for change in their own areas.

What this paper is about

This paper describes how Lamb Street changed from a day centre for people with severe mental illness into the Pod – a place for social brokerage and a catalyst for social change. It is a transformation, built on positive risk-taking, that has delivered wider benefits across Coventry. People who journey through the Pod now take part and contribute to the life of their city – and beyond – on their own terms, like everyone else. They are citizens and most definitely not 'service users'. It's an important distinction. The term 'service user' limits the potential and possibility of everyone. A citizen has a voice and a right to be heard.

Christine Eade – the Pod's Manager – her colleagues, citizens and friends who made that journey have shown the difference that can be made by vision, energy, enthusiasm and person-centred approaches.

The key words of advice that stand out are: "listen, connect, value, inspire, influence share, transform". But most of all, "keep at it".

Background

2009

Coventry City Council's award-winning Pod used to be known as the Lamb Street Day Centre. An unassuming building in the centre of the city. It offered therapeutic support groups, gardening and courses in basic English and basic Maths to people with severe mental illness. Only staff and 'service users' went there, there was no real reason for anyone else to do so.

Back then there were 106 people regularly attending the centre, about half had been referred by the Community Mental Health Team more than ten years previously. There was no sense that moving on was either possible or a good idea. The language was one of "keeping people safe".

2017

The building looks the same on the outside, but inside it is very different. It's still run by Coventry City Council. But now as 'the Pod' it is known across the city. Today everyone is welcome, not just a specific group of people. And there is every reason to visit. The vibrant café, host to many an evening event, cooks amazing vegan food for the same price as a meal deal. This summer it was rated 31 of 496 restaurants in Coventry on Tripadvisor. That really tells you all you need to know about the Pod's approach to innovation and quality.

The main business of the Pod, however, is social brokerage. There are around 200 referrals a year. These are for people with the most complex and critical mental health needs.

The work starts with a meeting at the Pod and then continues in a place of their choice. It might be in the café, or anywhere in the community. The focus is on the person and their individual mental health recovery in a way, pace and place that works best for them.

New opportunities and interests are found across the city. People are supported to re-engage with their communities. These are journeys of discovery, creativity and hope. Challenging at times but based on the right of the citizen to access universal opportunities and live life rather than 'use' services.

People now move on, but the Pod is still there as the first point of contact if people need to re-connect. For many, just by being there, the Pod provides the quiet support that people need.

Making connections

The Pod also manages several city-wide programmes, each bringing people together in a way that leads to positive social change – both for the individual but also the community.

Around 15,000 people engage with the Pod in some way each year. There's Food Union, Time Union, an arts collaborative, a strand promoting quiet activism and an annual mental health arts festival; all catalysts for connections and social change. It is an approach that benefits the whole city, not just the citizens with severe mental illness.

Leadership

The change that has taken place over the last eight years primarily is due to the vision, values and leadership of Christine Eade. She joined in 2009, bringing a determination that people with severe mental illness would benefit from the same opportunities as everyone else. Since then, she has moved from managing a day centre to leading a social movement. It is difficult to overestimate the impact Christine and her team have had on people's lives.

“Some people just stand out in the sea. Like a rock with a light on top. That's Christine.”

Colin Oddy, a citizen of the Pod

The future

Challenges will always remain for the Pod, obstacles worked around and new opportunities found and made.

The team recently piloted Needs and Wellbeing assessments for people with severe mental health needs who receive secondary mental health services. There is the same focus on making time for people, listening and building trust. The outcomes help ensure that the care and support provided by the NHS and the council continue to be personalised, recovery-focused and compliant with the Care Act.

Soon the Pod will move to a building in [FarGo](#), Coventry's new Creative Quarter. It's an appropriate destination. The Pod has contributed significantly to the cultural capital of the city. And, in doing so, it has challenged national assumptions around what and how social care can deliver.

THE JOURNEY FROM DAY CENTRE TO SOCIAL BROKERAGE

The Department of Health's policy 'Putting People First' set a more personalised direction for social care in 2007, introducing choice, control and personal budgets. By 2009 Coventry City Council was already driving forward on this agenda in most service areas, but as with the majority of councils, lagged behind in mental health. The largest hurdle, in general, being the acceptance of positive risk-taking as an integral element of successful person-centred approaches and personal budget use.

In 2008 the Department of Health (DH) established the Implementing Recovery through Organisational Change (ImROC) programme to address the changes needed in NHS mental health services to better support personal (rather than clinical) recovery. 'Recovery' in mental health means the process through which people find ways to lead meaningful lives with or without the symptoms of their condition.

Recovery and personalisation are intertwined. But they are still commonly seen as separate NHS or council responsibilities. Christine believes a "person's mental health recovery map is as unique as their fingerprint". When seen in that context, any journey towards recovery needs to be person-centred or it will not take account of the individual's own hopes, concerns, skills, preferences or situation.

Change

Christine joined the Day Centre team in April 2009 after running Route-forward, a transport and travel programme that developed people's skills to help them travel independently. Clearly, the same possibilities existed for people attending Lamb Street Day Centre, but a different approach was needed – and quickly. The centre closed between May and December for a planned refurbishment programme.

The approach she was determined to introduce “not because I was asked or told to do it, but because it's what had to be done” was Social Brokerage. “It demands emotional intelligence and ingenuity. It is not simply resource finding or signposting.”

What is Social Brokerage?

Social brokerage is “solution and outcomes focused and aims to optimise a person's connectivity to and inclusion in their community and thus build sustainable social support networks”.

The skills required are:



Christine developed a model of practice that re-inspired the Lamb Street team's passion for mental health work and enhanced their existing skills. She also devised a varied training programme to fill any gaps identified within the team and for referring practitioners. By January 2012, a social brokerage qualification was jointly developed and delivered with Coventry University.

She is clear that "being person-centred is largely about having time, emotional intelligence, integrity. It's not about conforming and not about having answers – it has to be about outcomes not outputs. If you are truly innovating you won't know all the answers. If you know the answers, it's not innovation – innovation is about positive risk taking".

Foundation planning was introduced, based on a series of one hour long individual conversations over 6-12 weeks to build trust, relationships and to identify interests and opportunities to support a person's recovery. More details are included in Annex One. It was the start of the role of the development workers and the approach that Christine describes as "giving time, love and really listening".

The Development Workers have grown in their new roles. Many have journeyed through the Pod themselves and add the powerful voice of lived experience to the support of others.

"...the skills the development workers have in identifying a person's outcomes is a wonderful thing to watch".

Parbinder Johal, *mental health social worker, Integrated Practice Units, Coventry and Warwickshire Partnership NHS Trust*

Making connections

Connections are made across the city; often but not exclusively with an emphasis on the arts. Christine recognises that artists are natural risk takers and has recruited many to work alongside citizens of the Pod. In her own words "...to respect and reflect people's aspirations. To generate these outcomes, we have forged innovative partnerships with a range of organisations and experts and brokered relationships with a rich mix of universal services." The list is long and ever changing but includes: music, martial arts, gardening, knitting groups, cycling, enterprise ventures and other local initiatives.

Development workers are encouraged to investigate other funding streams to support people's ambitions. For example, regeneration programmes, universal services, self directed support from the council such as personal budgets and direct payments and grant making trusts.

A more entrepreneurial approach is encouraged and a more creative way of using any funding developed. For example, a former pianist, who required in-patient treatment on average once every eighteen months, used his direct payment to have software lessons with a local composer. These helped re-engage and re-energise his existing talent. He has not used in-patient services for the last seven years.

The values

The Pod uses the principles of both personalisation and recovery to underpin its approach. These values speak to both the statutory commissioning and provider organisations and, most importantly, emphasise the right of the individual to expect that support.

The service focuses on the recovery model and believes that:

- People can develop personal resilience and manage their mental health and wellbeing.
- Accessing support from the Pod is a step on the individual's recovery journey and not the end destination.
- People have the right to be included and the right to regain their place in the community and access universal opportunities such as training, education and employment.
- People should be able to exercise choice and control and opportunities should be explored to improve choice and control.
- People have the right to design and manage their own package of support and that to facilitate this, advice, information and support should be available.

This rights-based approach has helped people with severe mental illness be recognised as citizens, both of the Pod, where they are referred to as such, and of Coventry. It's an important distinction. The term 'service user' limits the potential and possibility of everyone. A citizen has a voice and a right to be heard.

It feels appropriate that the Pod sits within Coventry City Council's internal provider services function. It proves that the Council accepts its statutory duty, rights and responsibilities to people with severe and enduring mental illness. The arrangement may be seen as a 'block contract' by some, but this has not limited the approach. Rather the Council has supported a creative delivery of outcomes that have benefited the life of its citizens beyond social care. And in doing so, many people's reliance on statutory support has reduced.

Wider social influence

The café is a very good example of how the Pod works, facilitating and providing opportunities for people to get involved, exchange time and develop their interests. It brings the community in and makes links with them. This doesn't happen simply because food is served there. The café is specifically designed as a catalyst for connections. So again, quality is intrinsic to its success.

Warm, friendly people in a welcoming environment serve delicious, healthy and cheap vegan food that exceeds all expectations. The café is vegan not particularly for ethical reasons but because the food regulations for dairy, meat and fish are burdensome. Affordability is the only real ethic. The savings made by using local suppliers and produce from the allotments have funded a third part-time café co-ordinator. The work opportunities generated by the Pod are always open to people who have used the referral process, many of whom are already volunteers. This ensures that the voice of lived experience is always present and valued.

The café consistently ranks in the top 50 of 496 restaurants in Coventry on [Trip Advisor's restaurant reviews](#).

In some way this achievement, delivered in a council building, sums up the Pod's approach to all its work. It raises the bar, and then jumps over it.

The Pod also hosts 'takeovers' where community groups are challenged to run the café for a day; buying, cooking and sharing vegan food at a total cost of no more than £30 for thirty diners. Over 40 groups have taken part, from overseas students to office teams. It is all about bringing people together and sharing.





A Knit Off at FarGo, a former industrial area of Coventry now repurposed and home to its creative quarter

The food is not the only reason to visit. The staff, the atmosphere, the chance to meet interesting people and the artwork all form a part. On one of the visits there was a group of people knitting a tea cosy for a donated caravan. It's strikingly beautiful but it will

also make the van warmer when it's used as a pop-up Repair Café in another part of town. Creative, fun and functional. Who wouldn't want to spend time at the Pod?

Food Union continues these themes and links with the wider Feeding Coventry strategy across the city. It has grown out of the Pod's desire to "facilitate and create platforms for social activism and maximise opportunities for people to cultivate new opportunities, connect with like-minded people and stimulate positive societal change." Some people involved have serious mental illness, some do not. That is not the issue. Everyone has something to offer.

The Allotmenters documentary, directed by a member of Collective//Pod, shows how well the separate strands of the Pod's work are woven together. The short film is engaging because of its high creative quality which, in turn, helps promote and embed the work of the Food Union.



Making a clay oven on one of the allotments

Time Union works on the same lines. Again best described by the people involved.

Map of Time Union exchanges across the city – and beyond

The Time Union currently has over 100 members. At any one time, around 20% (who are happy to disclose) will have lived experience of mental health services. Since it launched three years ago around 927 hours have been exchanged across the city, from some of the most deprived wards to some of the most privileged. With one

international student continuing to do a language exchange via Skype since returning back home. Hence the aeroplane on the map!



Collective//Pod, founded in 2010, is an artist collective. The majority of its members have experienced severe and enduring mental illness and have journeyed or are journeying through the Pod. There is a mix of composers, musicians, published writers, graphic and fine artists. One collective member runs an independent record label.

Collective//Pod forges relationships with local, national and international artists to curate over 50 events annually for Coventry. They co-broker master classes with professional artists for others in the Pod. They believe that a city that has creative life and good access to the arts is a city that inspires images of possibility and stimulates positive change: all qualities intrinsic to a city bidding for the City of Culture 2021 status.

Collective//Pod has a proven reputation for cutting edge and ambitious programming. With a unique take on mental health, arts and activism, it curates an annual mental health arts festival called Scratch the Surface. This year's festival ran from 30th Sept – 10th October 2017 and attracted some incredible artists and art institutions. Amongst the contributors were the Adamson Collection Trust, which is one of the major international collections of art objects made by people who lived in European mental asylums; Bethlem Museum of the Mind, which owns the historic collections of South London and Maudsley (the original Bedlam); the Wellcome Collection and festival collaborators Mental Spaghetti.

Stuart Semple, the contemporary British artist and curator, shares his views here:

“There’s something incredibly special about the Pod’s Collective/ / Pod; the reverberations from the creativity that starts there reaches way beyond the building. They are adding a huge amount to art and culture in the city. It’s proof solid that once people connect, or sometimes re-connect with their creativity, they can regain a powerful connection with their own unique path in life. I am in awe of what Collective/ / Pod are achieving; they are normalising things that should be normal anyway. They’ve found a way of doing things that just works.”

The City Council deserves to be pleased with its achievement. The social brokerage model enabled the Pod to extend its influence across the city, leading to positive change for all the citizens involved not just ones from the Pod.

Councillor Faye Abbott, Cabinet Member for Adult Services for Coventry City Council, said:

“The Pod quickly established itself as a key part in how the Council that supports people in their mental health recovery journey.

“Literally thousands of people have benefitted from the service and its strength is how it works with them in collaborative, personalised and often innovative ways.

“But its impact is much wider and through its social brokerage model it benefits more than just those who are referred and helps to promote positive attitudes towards people with mental ill health and challenge the myths associated with it.”

The Pod was involved in Coventry’s bid to be UK City of Culture 2021. This in itself demonstrates the high quality and impact of its creative work. The city was shortlisted in July 2017 and awaits the final announcement in December 2017. The promotional video describes Coventry as a “place of discovery, a place of hope, a city with stories and a city on a journey.” These ambitions align closely with those of the Pod itself. A sure sign that its strategic approach has found a wider fit.

The Pod will move later in 2017 from its premises in Lamb Street to the developing Creative Quarter of Coventry, closer to the city centre and just one bus journey away for everyone. It is not just a move of convenience, it is a symbol of the distance the Pod has travelled, from a service for people with severe mental illness to a social movement that benefits all those taking part.

Citizen's recovery

Christine believes that all those who attended the Lamb Street Day Centre back in 2009 now “live full lives with no or very significantly reduced involvement of mental health services. Some I just see around in town, and it's a knowing nod and smile, others are more passionate and others have become my mentors on various projects and developments.”

Some people's journey understandably took more time than others. Many had been attending the day centre for years before Christine arrived. One person thought it was for 'around three years' when it was actually seven. In response to that time unwittingly lost, the Pod introduced a Pass Card to give people confidence about moving on.

The Pass Card offered a fixed number of one hour sessions with a development worker after leaving the service, without the need to be re-referred by a Care Co-ordinator. No-one has ever used all the slots on their card.

It is a scheme that Christine thinks she may need to re-introduce in response to the increasing pressure on people to move out of services more quickly.

TLAP profiled the Pod's Pass Card scheme in 2013.

Three people who have journeyed through the Pod gave permission for their own stories to be told:

STORY ONE

One person, who asks to remain anonymous, was referred to the Pod after a period of inpatient treatment in 2010. Within a couple of years he was employed there, co-ordinating the funding bids and the development of the service. He had previously worked for a blue chip company and brought a powerful combination of professional and personal insight to the role. It's interesting then to reflect on his description of Christine: working all hours, being incredibly creative, challenging the system. These are traits more associated and endorsed by the private sector. The difference being, as he points out, she channels these energies into being creative about the possibilities in people's lives – rather than a profit margin. Five years on, and he now works as a Transformation Lead for another council: helped by the Prince 2 accreditation his Direct Payment originally funded and the inspiration he took from the Pod.

STORY TWO

The Pod helped broker a mentoring relationship between marketing graduate Fliss and a journalist on a leading women's magazine.

Fliss is clear about the impact the Pod had on her life, which can be unpredictable and challenging because of her bipolar disorder.

"The biggest thing that has come out of working with The Pod is the chance to develop myself personally and broaden my options for later life. I have started to believe in myself and the talent I have. I am not well enough to work currently but I can finally see hope in the future. When I am able I could write part time or even full time for magazines and make a stable living for myself!"

Fliss writes for a key Coventry arts magazine and has been recruited as an intern by Coventry City Council. She is being mentored by their head of communications to lead on marketing for Collective//Pod's Scratch the Surface mental health arts festival.

STORY THREE

Colin was referred in 2011 and doesn't think he would be here now if it wasn't for the Pod and its manager. He was allocated a Development Worker and became involved in running the café. He moved on after a couple of years but then re-engaged with the Pod, wanting to use his experience to help with service design. Via Collective//Pod, Colin now supports the development of other people's art practice. In turn the Pod mentors and represents him as an emergent contemporary artist, one who enhances the cultural offer of the city.

Colin has a solo show planned. A trailer for his last exhibition, held at Coventry's Centre for Contemporary Arts in 2015, can be seen here: <https://vimeo.com/125414136> The work, in collaboration with his teenage daughter, gives compelling intergenerational context and depth to Colin's own central themes of "preservation, destruction, creative vandalism and musings on the past, present and future".

All three people readily describe the positive role that the Pod played in their recovery journey so far. Christine Eade, the Pod Manger is described by them in the following ways; she...

- Challenges the system
- Makes her service in consultation/co-production with people as partners
- Always has good ideas
- Is clever and very wise
- Makes people feel special just being friends with her
- Genuine and real
- Makes connections
- Waits until people are ready and doesn't pressurise.
- Genuine
- Moves people on

Leadership

“How do we emulate Christines all over England. Everybody deserves her. Not just Coventry”.

Parbinder Johal, *mental health social worker, Integrated Practice Units, Coventry and Warwickshire Partnership NHS Trust*

It is not possible to talk of the success of the Pod without describing the leadership qualities of Christine She led the organisation through significant change and is both liked and highly valued – as a colleague and a friend.

These are some of the strengths identified by her colleagues from outside the Pod:

- A strategic thinker who also gets involved at the frontline
- A solutions-finder
- Very good at challenging – but in a really skilled way. “She’s revolutionised my perspective”
- Collaborative
- Values everyone – “I love that about her as a human and a professional”
- Very accessible
- Always gets back, by phone or email
- High degree of emotional intelligence

- Weaves it all together. Synthesises everything into a common purpose
- Really good at promoting
- Excellent presenter. Good at graphics. Charismatic.
- Always has the data
- Can transform
- Open and transparent
- An inspiration for many people

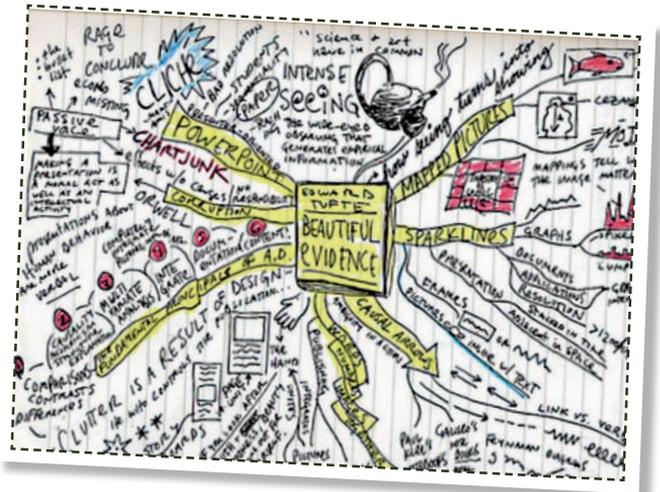
The Pod and the Craftivists: Stitching it all together



Christine's own advice on driving positive change is:

- Don't be frightened of disagreement
- Be prepared for difficult conversations
- Push and provoke
- Ask the difficult question. And then keep asking it.
- Enable citizen's rights
- Look for the mutual gain
- Be brave
- Test it and build on it
- Be pragmatic
- Do stuff

"Beautiful Evidence" Map



Christine both understands and is very good at evidencing change and the impact of outcomes at an individual but also strategic level. She is creative but no stranger to the need to provide data, and/or process maps; evidence outcomes, use Cost Benefit Analysis to ensure they are sustainable; draw down funding from other sources and invest to save.

She pulls it all together, with the stories of the differences that can be made, to help shape the direction of the Pod and ensure its sustainability. Everything is shared via high quality films and engaging use of Facebook, Twitter – to spread and embed the story of the Pod and all those involved across the city. Essentially, she gets her ducks in a row – and let's them fly.

The Pod's 'Beautiful Evidence' Map above shows the wide range of ideas and approaches used to share information.

Needs and Wellbeing Assessment

It is clear that the Pod will never stop evolving. The Pod recently piloted Needs and Wellbeing Assessments for the following groups of patients from Coventry and Warwickshire Partnership NHS Trust:

- People experiencing psychosis, paranoid illness, schizophrenia and bi-polar, who receive secondary mental health services.
- People being discharged from local inpatient services, who are ready for social brokerage.

These Assessments are discussions about the care and support needs people have and the goals they want to achieve.

The aim is to increase the capacity of mental health practitioners in the Integrated Practice Units whilst ensuring that mental health services in Coventry are compliant with the Care Act.

Needs and Wellbeing Assessments take place in the following way: A Pod Development Worker organises up to seven meetings within a 28 day period to do the Assessment. This is foundation planning and is based on a dynamic and purposeful conversation with a Citizen within a set timeframe. (See Annex One for more information). It is signed off by the Care Co-ordinator. Based on the assessment results, a light touch social brokerage offer for six weeks might be offered or social brokerage for up to 40 weeks, which might include a direct payment or personal health budget to support recovery.

A Development Worker commented "Change happens when we both take positive risks. The 'push and pull' of the debate, can take Citizens' lives to unexpected and exciting places".

There have been some challenges but also some early successes. The pilot has been mainstreamed

Maxine Shakespeare, Coventry City Council's Independent Living Practice Advisor, believes that the Pod's social brokerage model, where opportunities within communities are explored and made, could be replicated across other council areas. That such a move could "develop a more creative and personalised approach to the delivery of health and social care; one that focuses on the social model of disability and illness". She thinks the opportunities are there, especially with Personal Health Budgets and Integrated Personal Commissioning, but that NHS commissioners may need support and evidence to see the value of creativity in improving people's mental health and wellbeing.

Evidence is in plentiful supply at the Pod. From transformed allotments to social activism, data to delicious lunches, individual outcomes to outstanding art. Stories and statistics are shared, messages communicated. Whatever future obstacles may be around the corner, it is certain that Christine Eade and the Pod will be planning a route around them in Coventry.

The best way to keep track of what is happening at the Pod, when and where is on social media; [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).

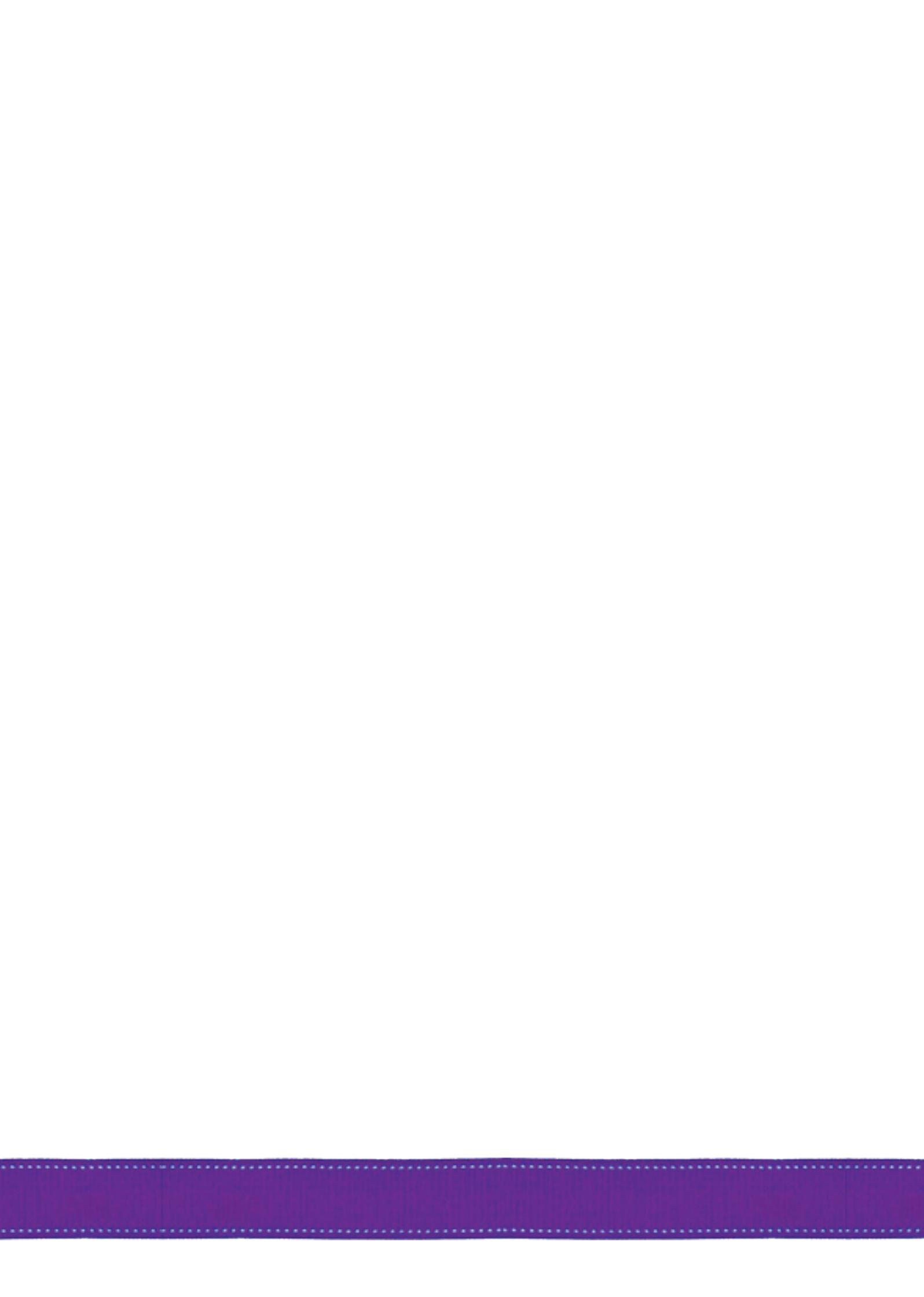


ANNEX ONE

Foundation Planning

- Foundation Planning provides an opportunity to build trust and forge the relationship and it is an essential first step into the service.
- Foundation Planning is triggered by an initial meeting with the Citizen, mental health practitioner; development worker and significant others to set the scene. Key inputs to this meeting are the Care Programme Approach (CPA) Care Plan and Risk Assessment documentation.
- This is followed by a number of 1:2:1 Foundation Planning meetings with a Development Worker.
- Foundation Planning can be used to support transition both in to and out of the service
- During Foundation Planning citizens will be given the opportunity to complete the Carer and User Expectations of Services (CUES) or the Recovery Star which are both self evaluation tools that will help them to identify their personal priorities.
- The sessions are solution and outcome focussed with an emphasis on identifying outcomes and priorities to enable the CPA Care plan.
- It's a forum through which the individual can influence the design and delivery of their CPA care plan and build the foundation for next steps.
- Throughout the Foundation Planning process and beyond individuals are encouraged to consider both the risks and benefits of any agreed activity/approach. Development Workers explore opportunities for positive risk taking to both empower the citizen and accelerate the achievement of outcomes.
- We make citizens aware that to achieve their outcomes we may need to work with a range of partner organisations and in some instances (but only with permission) will invite representatives from partner organisations into the meetings.

- If the person has expressed an interest in employment or the social enterprises The Employment Support Service will become involved and will develop an employment action plan.
- The team will work collaboratively with the individual to develop a personalised training plan if one of the outcomes is social enterprise.
- The person that has referred the individual can get involved in the Foundation Planning and we will inform them of outcomes.
- As an outcome of Foundation Planning some people may identify that they would benefit further from this service, others might be signposted to an alternative service or feel ready to exit services.



Think Local Act Personal

Think Local Act Personal (TLAP) is a national strategic partnership of more than 50 organisations committed to supporting the continued implementation of personalisation and community-based health, care and support.

web: www.thinklocalactpersonal.org.uk

email: thinklocalactpersonal@scie.org.uk

twitter: @tlap1

