



Report 4 of 4

# Highlights from the Evaluation of Birmingham Changing Futures Together

---

Revolving Doors Agency / March 2019



# Highlights from the Evaluation of Birmingham Changing Futures Together

Over the past five years of the programme, Birmingham Changing Futures Together (BCFT) has explored what is important to our service users, tested models of working together as well as garnered a great deal of learning that will inform our continued journey towards systems change. This work is consolidated in our Systems Change Action Plan which outlines our main priorities as we move onto the next phase of the programme.

This report highlights some of the many positive achievements to our services and how we work together to improve opportunities for people with multiple complex needs in Birmingham.

In particular, we are proud of how Experts by Experience have shaped the programme to the point that they are an integral part of everything we do. The Expert by Experience voice can be heard clearly in our services, in decision making and in how we approach our daily work. But while Experts by Experience represent a major success, we now need to meet the challenge of ensuring that the Expert by Experience voice is truly heard at every level of the system and continues to be heard after the programme finishes.

The Lead Worker Peer Mentor programme has led the way in service delivery for people with complex needs and we have been thrilled that this model is being adopted by partners across sectors including criminal justice, health and housing. A key aim of the programme is to influence the way in which service delivery is designed, and we

## Quote symbol key:

If you see one of the symbols below next to a passage of text, you will find the same symbol next to the corresponding quote(s) in that section.



## I am personally excited about how much we can achieve together in the coming years

could not have done this without the exceptional work done by our Lead Workers and Peer Mentors at Shelter, Birmingham MIND and SIFA. The focus for the coming months is how we continue to share the learning from this programme and encourage more services to re-design services in this way.

The launch of the ICAT system is also a major success in an era where many big IT projects fail. But it too brings a challenge to ensure that we develop our culture of data sharing in a way that benefits both our service users and transforms the system for the long-term.

Thanks go to all the members of our Core Group from across the public and third sector who help to steer our programme, members of the No Wrong Door Network, and in particular our delivery partners, Shelter, Birmingham MIND, SIFA and St Basils who have been pivotal to the success of this collaboration. I am personally excited about how much we can achieve together in the coming years.

## Sophie Wilson

Programme Director  
Birmingham Changing Futures Together



# About Birmingham Changing Futures Together

Birmingham Changing Futures Together is one of twelve *Fulfilling Lives: Supporting People with Multiple Needs* sites funded by the National Lottery Community Fund. Birmingham Changing Futures Together exists to create better support for people with multiple and complex needs through systems change. The programme also aims to directly improve the lives of people experiencing multiple and complex needs across Birmingham. The programme defines multiple and complex needs as people experiencing two or more of the following: homelessness, problematic substance use, risk of offending and mental ill health. Importantly, the focus on service and system change seeks to ensure effective models and approaches pioneered during the project become mainstream.

Birmingham Changing Futures Together consists of several work streams (see pages 5-6) which work together to fulfill the overall project aims. At the heart of the project is an ambition to support individuals with complex needs to lead stable and fulfilled lives in a system where services work more seamlessly together, identify complex needs earlier and signpost across the services effectively and efficiently.

**“I am proud to be part of a programme driving system change, working, for example, alongside the police to help them understand the behaviour patterns of people with low to medium criminal behaviour.”**

Expert by Experience

**Birmingham Changing Futures Together defines multiple and complex needs as people experiencing two or more of the following:**



Homelessness



Problematic substance use



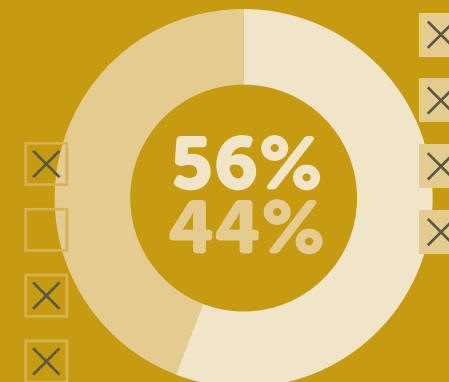
Risk of offending



Mental ill health

## Lead Worker Peer Mentor

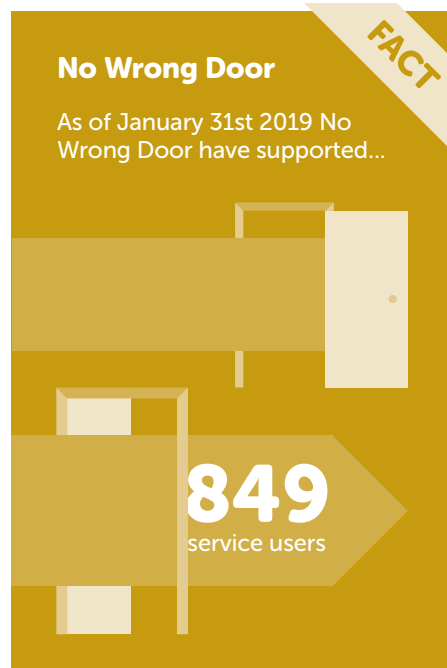
Since December 2014 56% of service users, supported by Lead Worker Peer Mentors, reported needing help with all 4 complex needs and 44% reported 3 complex needs.



**FACT**

## No Wrong Door

No Wrong Door consists of 16 organisations working together as a network committed to information-sharing and a common approach in supporting people with complex needs. The aim is that any individual entering these Birmingham services can access a whole system of support through one referral form and there is no 'wrong door'.



## Lead Worker Peer Mentor programme

Lead Worker Peer Mentor programme work with individuals who have at least three of the four complex needs so are often very vulnerable and in need of a great deal of support. Lead Workers assist and support people to navigate the variety of services. They are assisted by Peer Mentors who have lived experience and have faced many of the issues affecting people with multiple complex needs.

*"Peer Mentors were able to normalise service users' experiences, helping them stay on the road to recovery. One individual talked of increasingly having disturbing dreams as she detoxed from drugs. With a similar experience in his past, the Peer Mentor was able to give the reassurance the service user needed to continue."*

Cllr Sharon Thompson

## Beyond the Basics

Beyond the Basics is available to No Wrong Door/Lead Worker Peer Mentor service users, and aims to prevent the "falling away" of support once an individual is well enough to "move on". The aim is to help people develop independence and resilience so they can build sustainable stable lives. The work stream is broken into 3 phases for each client, moving at a pace that suits them. The first is "Engagement" with the Beyond the Basics team, second is "Progression and Development", with the third being "Moving Forward" into the wider community. Beyond the Basics has now concluded as a work stream.



## Every Step of the Way

Every Step of the Way is the user involvement and engagement programme. It supports, trains, enables and empowers people with multiple and complex needs to participate as Experts by Experience (EbE) in the Birmingham Changing Futures Together Programme. Having experienced recovery and stability for a while, Experts By Experience will have used a number of services and are in a position where they choose to be involved in being part of changing services and systems.

*"I got involved with Every Step of the Way on the advice of a friend. She said I would find good support and get access to opportunities that would help me develop as well as having the chance to give something back. She was right. I've volunteered elsewhere but Every Step of the Way is different. I'm part of a community. I feel connected, with the people who run it as well as with my colleagues."*

Expert by Experience

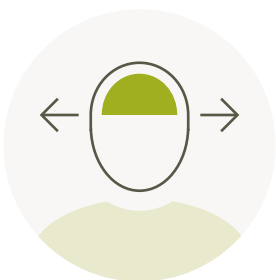
# About our evaluation

## What we focused on

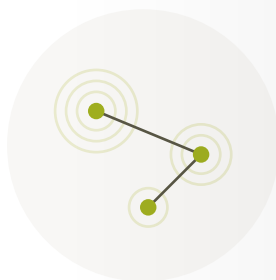
Since early 2018, Revolving Doors Agency has led the local evaluation of the Birmingham Changing Futures Together programme. The on-going evaluation has focused over the course of the last year on three specific elements of the Birmingham Changing Futures Together programme:



understanding the current experiences of people facing multiple and complex needs across Birmingham;



the impact of Psychologically Informed Environment (PIE) training on staff and their ways of working, and;



the impact of the 'Every Step of the Way' 'Expert by Experience' programme on the wider system.



## Who we talked to

Across the evaluation, Revolving Doors Agency interviewed **26 service users, 18 practitioners, 8 Experts by Experience and 10 stakeholders.**

A core element of the evaluation approach was working with peer researchers in the service users' experiences element of the project. Three peer researchers from the Experts by Experience were recruited, trained<sup>1</sup> and supported to conduct the service user interviews and co-analyse the findings. Peer researchers offer:

- insights grounded in a different experience;
- the ability to challenge the implicit assumptions of "standard" researchers;
- the ability to "uncover" the unknown;
- the ability to interact with research participants through shared experiences.

This report brings together the findings from the three individual evaluations to draw together key highlights and some learning for the overall programme<sup>2</sup>.

**26**  
Service users

**18**  
Practitioners

**10**  
Stakeholders

**8**  
Experts by experience

<sup>1</sup> Peer Researchers gained OCN accreditation in peer research with Revolving Doors Agency  
<sup>2</sup> Please contact JanP@BVSC.Org for details of the individual reports

# What do we know about the impact of the BCFT programme so far?

There have been positive impacts on service users, staff skill and expertise as well as from the work of the Experts by Experience.

**Service users** were more positive about engaging with the support from services across Birmingham than before. ■

Most **staff** reported that after PIE training they were able to 'read between the lines', pause and consider the best way to respond to clients. ▲

Staff who had undertaken PIE training were very positively viewed. Service users particularly noticed **an increased level of staff skill and compassion across most services**, in particular homelessness services. ▲

There was an overwhelming positivity from stakeholders about the Experts by Experience – their preparedness, work ethic and desire to change the system. ●

*"Access to things, people, getting access to dry houses and stuff like that. I'd never even heard about dry houses until last year so something must have happened around here."*

■ Service User

*"...as a concept it's basically looking at what is happening with someone from an emotional standpoint rather than a physical standpoint."*

▲ Staff Member

*"It's not like they are doing a job that's just like mundane. They actually engage, and actually will not turn you away until you go away yourself thinking there's someone there on your shoulder."*

▲ Service User

FACT

## Every Step of the Way

Since March 2015 ESOW have...



trained and supported

**131**

Experts by Experience



offering

**1779**

opportunities



**18**

of which found employment

*"It's as though they've researched things. They don't just do it. They've looked into it and what could be the best effect of it and what's the likely outcome of it.... So, that's always quite useful. The ones I've come across as well are all, as I've said, they're really quite dedicated."*

● External Stakeholder

## There are points in the Birmingham Changing Futures Together programme where the positive aspects can be reinforced and used to influence systems change.

**Housing is a key issue which needs to be prioritized in the initial work with service users and in systems change work.** Those with no housing, poor living conditions or little housing security tended to be less positive about their lives and be less engaged with other key services. ■

Many service users noted the good referrals and joint working between homelessness and substance misuse services. There was **less evidence of consistent effective joint working across the system to address wider needs.** In terms of systems change across the Birmingham Changing Futures Together the positive joint working between homelessness and substance misuse needs to infiltrate further across the system to encompass mental health and offending.



“they’ve passed the buck, passed the buck, passed the buck. Two years later I’m still in emergency accommodation, no tenancy agreement, no proof, no bank account.”

■ Service Users

“Since I met, \*lead worker name\*, things have gotten easier. They help keep my appointments, send me texts to remind me and stuff like that.”

● Service User

**Engagement remains difficult, and many service users have experienced past negative experiences of services.** Most respondents did not reengage with specific services if their previous experience had been poor or if they felt it was unlikely they would receive the support they needed. But the success of the Lead Worker Peer Mentor programme suggests that it is possible to reconnect with even the most entrenched individual. ●

**The significance of the PIE training in how staff engage with service users is notable.** There were many examples, throughout the staff interviews and ethnographic research, of how staff were creative in the way they initially developed a connection with new service users. This relates back to the increased trust in services by service users ▲

FACT

“I’ll take my instrument with me. Like, my guitar with me. We’ll sit there and we’ll have a little jam session. And, to a lot of the clients, doing something completely and utterly different from doing support work, helps them a hell of a lot”

▲ PIE trained Staff Member

### Psychologically Informed Environment

Since 2016, St Basils has delivered three days of PIE Foundation Training and a year of Reflective Practice groups to almost 200 frontline staff across 15 organisations within No Wrong Door. St Basils has currently completed seven full cohorts of training and Reflective Practice and will complete the eighth and final cohort in April 2019.

200

staff

15

organisations

# What learning can be drawn for the BCFT programme from the 2018 evaluation?

## There are lessons to be drawn for the Birmingham Changing Futures Together programme

**There was evidence across the programme that many service users were not aware of the wider services available in Birmingham.** For example, service users might access a service for housing needs but be unaware that their mental health, substance abuse or other needs could be helped within the wider system and indeed connected to via the service they were working with. This mattered less to service users who had been involved in services for a longer period of time. Given the complex needs of the service users in Birmingham Changing Futures Together this is an important issue.

The work of **Lead Workers and Peer Mentors was highly valued** and appeared to make tangible difference to outcomes. Lead Workers and Peer Mentor roles were important to resolving pressing issues such as benefits or housing, supporting people to attend appointments (e.g. health and criminal justice) and there were indications that this work had long-term impacts on service users' identity and confidence "the people that are helping us; they make you feel included again".

It was perceived by some service users that **more should be done to inform people who have complex needs of the whole range of services available** to them, as most tended to engage with only one or two specific services

**"They have to build up that trust before they can even try and carry out any support. It starts off with, you know, the basics hello, a little bit of an introduction and they get told to fuck off and they do a bit and they go back and you know it works out really well in the end."**

■ PIE trained staff



**"(It's), a bit of a bear trap really is that it's often very difficult to ... just capture and document these you know little instances where there's been a change in direction or a change of thought or a change of opinion... perhaps leading to ... you know something specific in a policy."**

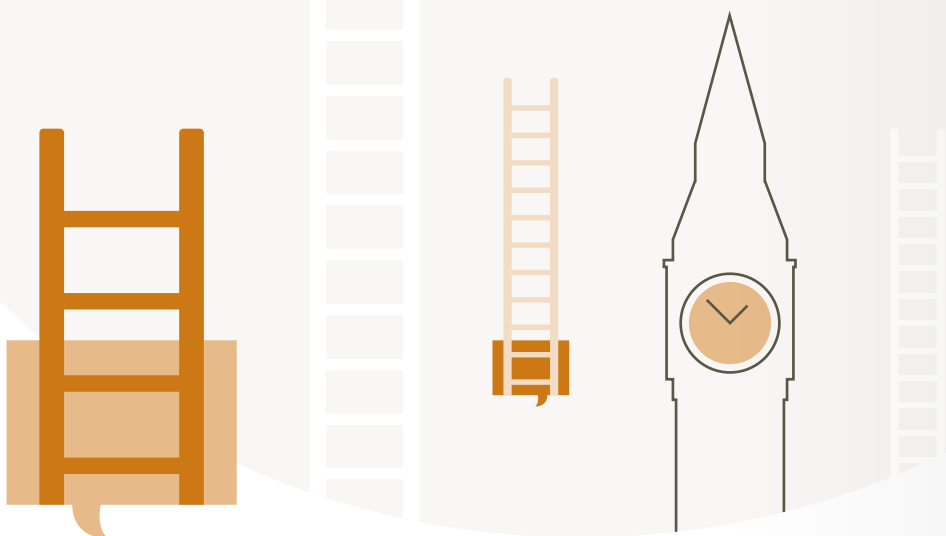
● External Stakeholder

- even if they displayed three or four complex needs. This may be a lack of awareness by service users of the breadth of help available. It may also be because service users are highlighting the issues that they feel they need more immediate help with. Either way service provision, by the very nature of the range of needs service users have, is complex across Birmingham. A challenge for the Birmingham Changing Futures Together programme going forward will be to develop a simple mechanism that communicates the available services and the pathway to and through them. This is a key role for the No Wrong Door Network in particular.

Likewise, **staff being PIE trained was important in the wider picture of engaging often entrenched service users** who often do not trust services initially. ■

The evaluation of the Every Step of the Way programme also highlighted that **capturing of impact data was not optimised**. It was also evident that stakeholders did not see this as an easy thing to do. This is important in a developing programme to ensure learning is captured and the programme adapted in real time. It is also not unusual in the process phase of a new programme that such activity is developed in later stages. ●





There is a **lack of understanding among stakeholders of what system change is as a concept and specifically in the context of Birmingham**. This is despite system change being the central aim of the Birmingham Changing Futures Together programme. But against this backdrop there was evidence of positive impacts on service users and the Experts by Experience. There was also evidence that some services were working well together. In terms of the Experts by Experience the **sheer reach of Every Step of the Way** has across the system in Birmingham and externally was impressive. Experts by Experience had worked with, amongst others: Department of Work and Pensions, Prison Reform Trust, the Police Service, Psychiatrists, GPs, Youth Crime Commission and Making Every Adult Matter.

Experts by Experience could see the potential they had to impact, particularly at a policy level, but were aware that their **influence was possibly being diluted by primarily working with those on the front line**. ▲

**“It’s alright for us talking to, you know, practitioners and those kinds of organisations, but you know, they’re grounds men aren’t they? They’re the ones who are delivering the service. The way the services are run...[,].... really it needs to be higher level. It needs to be towards MPs.”**

▲ Expert by Experience

**Many successes can be identified across the three individual evaluations.** In some cases, (such as engagement with service users) the foot print of several services can be identified. As a result, there is some evidence that services are more connected. But it is also clear more can be done to work more seamlessly together. This is evident from the low awareness of service users of the breadth of services available across Birmingham. Some connectedness will come from the integrated Common Assessment Tool database (iCAT) allowing better data sharing and less need for service users to repeat their stories to gain access to services.

It is also clear that service users in Birmingham are very positive about the staff they are working with: feeling respected, feeling staff were going above and beyond for them and getting to know the individual service users at a more familial level were the main reasons given for their admiration for the staff. Without doubt Psychologically Informed Environment training has impacted on this change, the Lead Worker Peer Mentor service as well as the fact that many of the staff working in service have personal Lived Experience. ♦

FACT

**Lead Worker Peer Mentor**

Lead Workers and Peer Mentors have supported 320 service users. As of Jan 31st 2019 there were 76 active service users.



320

helped

76

active

“I’ve got two support workers (Lead Worker Peer Mentor) ... got me somewhere to live. Got me a CGL Worker..... just having those three people has changed it [my life] a lot”

♦ Service User

## How has our learning changed how we work with others?

The focus of the Birmingham Changing Futures Together programme has been service and system change with a particular focus on creating strong partnerships that work seamlessly together. The ambition is that effective models and approaches tested in this work will have a legacy beyond the programme. Below are a few examples of the programme's successes:<sup>3</sup>



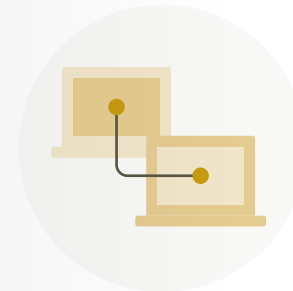
**The Police and Crime Commissioner with Birmingham Changing Futures Together is jointly funding an expansion of the Inreach Outreach model pioneered by the programme.** This will create two new Inreach Outreach roles. Both new roles are ring-fenced for people with lived experience who will work in collaboration with a pilot being undertaken with the **support of Birmingham Safeguarding Adult Board and West Midlands Police** focusing on individuals who are currently living in houses with multiple occupants and at unregulated (Exempt) properties.



**Birmingham Changing Futures Together has secured funding from Birmingham City Council to support an Early Adopter Pilot Project for Housing First in Birmingham.** Established in December 2018, the programme aims to support those with the most entrenched multiple and complex needs who are currently homeless. The programme will continue the Lead Worker/Peer Mentor model of support ensuring its on-going legacy in Birmingham.



**The Birmingham and Solihull Mental Health NHS Foundation Trust Rapid Assessment Interface and Discharge team has established a pilot project with Birmingham Changing Futures Together.** The Care Navigators will be supporting Acute and Urgent Care in avoiding unnecessary attendance at Accident and Emergency, and admission from non-mental health related issues to acute inpatient wards (mental health). The two Navigators will mirror the No Wrong Door's model to work with patients referred from NHS Accident and Emergency, and will assist clients in the timely discharge from Accident and Emergency and PDU; and **create a place of safety by addressing social, housing, benefits and other non-specific mental health needs, which have contributed to relapse/access to Urgent Care and Acute Services in the past.**



**The Intelligent Common Assessment Tool (ICAT) computer system is now live in the No Wrong Door network,** ensuring secure exchange of information across these services but more importantly eradicating the need for our service users to repeat their information and their stories many times.



The Birmingham Changing Futures Together programme has achieved a great deal over the last few years. Our challenge going forward is to build on these achievements and embed them across a system which works seamlessly together for the good of our client group.

<sup>3</sup> The examples have been provided by BCFT.



**Birmingham Changing Futures Together**

138 Digbeth  
Birmingham  
B5 6DR

T 0121 678 8866  
E [changingfutures@bvsc.org](mailto:changingfutures@bvsc.org)  
W [www.changingfuturesbham.co.uk](http://www.changingfuturesbham.co.uk)  
 @BhamCFT

**Revolving Doors Agency**

South Bank Technopark  
90 London Road  
London  
SE1 6LN

T 020 7407 0747  
E [admin@revolving-doors.org.uk](mailto:admin@revolving-doors.org.uk)  
W [www.revolving-doors.org.uk](http://www.revolving-doors.org.uk)  
 @RevDoors

In partnership with

