

Appendix 5 – Case Studies

Case studies

All funded projects are required to submit case studies and beneficiary feedback as part of their regular monitoring reports. Below is a selection of case studies and feedback from live projects and projects that completed their funding terms in 2020-21.

Arthur Rank Hospice Charity *‘The Befriending Project for people with life-limiting conditions’*

Awarded £18,677.00 to employ a project coordinator who will develop and manage a Caring Communities befriending scheme where volunteers will meet patients in their homes.

Patient background:

J is an 86-year-old female with heart failure who lives alone having lost her husband this year.

Services/support received prior to referral into scheme:

J was referred into the Day Therapy team at Arthur Rank in September 2019, where she initially attended with her husband. He died in April of this year and she has continued to receive telephone support from Day Therapy and was referred in to Caring Communities whilst in between Day Therapy programmes.

What difference the Volunteer has made to them:

The volunteer assigned to J had met her (and her late husband) previously in Day Therapy earlier in the year. J found this helpful and appreciated the fact that the volunteer could recollect her husband. She very much looks forward to the weekly calls and said the volunteer can always “pick up on her mood and knows when she is in the doldrums” and allows her time to talk about this. She acknowledged that small things could trigger her grief and mentioned an interview on TV about loneliness after losing a loved one, which she discussed through with the volunteer. She stated that she could talk to the volunteer in a way she couldn’t to friends and family, the volunteer allowed her time and space to verbalise her grief in a way she couldn’t with those closest to her. It has been a difficult year for her coping with her loss with everything else going on in the world, so she has found the calls a source of comfort and something to look forward to.

Disability Huntingdonshire (DISH) *‘IT Upgrade Project’*

Awarded £6,000.00 to upgrade the database system to meet the increasing demand for providing benefits advice to adults with disabilities.

Staff and CEO comments on the new database:

‘After 6 months, it is a vital, efficient, and effective tool. We are currently working on extending the reporting functions as we have bespoke projects in 2021, which will enable us to track those projects with accuracy. This is critical to our future funding and sustainability. Working with the database is now not a chore.’

'I don't think it would have been possible to work from home effectively without the online database. It has been so difficult to plan ahead due to Covid, and the ability to collaborate with other workers without meeting has been vital. I've had to attend appeal hearings by telephone from home, and in one case an important document wasn't part of the appeal papers. Thanks to Charity Log I was able to email a copy to all the parties and save us having to postpone the hearing. On another occasion, a judge asked me for details of my contacts with a client to establish the timeline of the case. Because everything was online, I could access the entire case history in seconds.'

Huntington's Disease Association '*Specialist Huntington's Disease Advisory service – Cambridgeshire*'

Awarded £4,000.00 to reduce the impact of HD on individuals and families and provide access to support that helps people with HD maximise their independence and have a better quality of life.

Professional Case Study: "The support that we get from the HDA absolutely underpins the care that we can provide our patients in Cambridge. HD patient's needs often extend far beyond their medical problems, into areas that we can't help with. The knowledge and experience that the Specialist Huntington's Disease Advisory service has means that we are always able to provide an avenue through which our patients can get the help they need. Furthermore, having a regional care advisor embedded in clinic means that we are able to address issues before they even arise thereby reducing the distress to the patients and the pressure on clinic through the need for emergency appointments and interventions. We have become acutely aware of this over the last 9 months since appointments have become virtual due to the COVID pandemic. The number of crisis-situations that have been dealt with by the HD clinic team have increased roughly four-fold. While part of this is undoubtedly due to lockdown and other changes, we are in no doubt that a significant part of this is because we have been unable to provide the same level of proactive support during the uncertainty of the initial Phase of the pandemic. Going forward we are aware that the role of the HDA in our clinic will become even more important as we start to come out of COVID restrictions." – Dr Sarah Mason, Neuropsychologist at the Huntington's disease clinic, University of Cambridge.

Ormiston Families '*Small Steps Together Programme*'

Awarded £50,000.00 to run an early intervention perinatal mental health project that supports 175 women and their families at risk of developing poor perinatal mental health.

Carmen was very anxious about having a baby and also about what equipment and other things she needed. She lived with the grandparents and wanted her own space in which to bring up her baby with the father. She had suffered from anxiety for a long time and there is a history of mental illness in the family.

When we first worked with Carmen, we always met in private and secure office space because home life was hectic due to living with wider family. Then the Covid-19 pandemic began, and we went into lockdown, so shifted to supporting her remotely via a mixture of phone support, conversations and text messaging.

As we gained Carmen's trust and understood more about her, we were able to agree a support plan and looked at her mental health together, using assessment tools such as CORE 10 and the Edinburgh Postnatal Depression scale. The first of her goals was to be prepared for the baby so we began by simply going through what the wider family already had which would be useful to her and then produced a list of what else she needed along with information about where these could be found cheaply. In this straightforward way we helped her understand not only what was needed but that she had what was required. Throughout this time, we continually encouraged and supported her as the birth approached, boosting her confidence.

After the baby was born the wider family wasn't happy about breastfeeding and discouraged her. We responded with support, encouragement, and information to boost her confidence that enabled her to make an informed choice around the importance of breast feeding and to give her baby this boost in the first months of their life.

During this time Carmen, and the father, were able to move into a place of their own (another goal) but Carmen's anxiety levels rose, and it became hard for her to leave the home, even for local walks. With our help she was gradually, and slowly, able to start to go out, always accompanied to begin with until she became more familiar with the new area in which she was living.

As Carmen's confidence grew and her anxiety reduced, we are pleased to say that she has settled into her new family life with the father, is going out with the baby, is still breastfeeding and reports that she is feeling a lot less anxious and is in a good place mentally. She is beginning to join in a community wellbeing group, albeit virtually at the moment, and has completed a course in baby massage.

Carmen has said 'The wellbeing group is good because the practitioner is really inclusive and talks to everyone getting them to contribute, if she didn't ask me, I wouldn't have willingly spoke up'.

Ormiston Families '*Mpower Cambridgeshire*'

Awarded £44,308.00 to launch Mpower in Cambridgeshire, helping 24 women who have had children removed and placed into care in order to reduce the risk of further child removals.

Sam was initially referred to Small Steps Together by her midwife, who was concerned about her mental health and the possibility of an abusive relationship. Sam had suffered neglect as a child and continued to have a turbulent relationship with her mother. Her maternal grandparents had recently passed away; Sam had found this particularly difficult as she had moved in with them at 15 years old. With a history of depression and domestic abuse, Sam's first child was already living with paternal grandparents under an interim care order and now Sam was pregnant again.

Lisa from the Small Steps Together team worked with Sam for nine months pre- and post-birth, however when Sam's case was stepped up to the courts, Lisa introduced her to Claire and the MPower service. Lisa and Claire worked closely to transition support for Sam to make sure she didn't have to re-tell her story.

Sam worked with Claire to set herself three goals:

- To have a safe house to live in for her and her baby.
- To have a job to earn money and not rely on benefits.
- To continue with contraception.

Since starting to work with MPower, Claire has supported Sam with housing applications, attending contraception appointments, finances and budgeting, accessing foodbanks, and has signposted her to free online courses and qualifications. Sam is now taking the contraceptive pill and continues to take medication to manage her mental health. Sam built strong relationships with both Lisa and Claire and is now accessing support from a CPFT support worker. Sam said, 'I feel supported by Claire, she helps me gets things sorted'.

Papworth Trust '*First Steps to Success*'

Awarded £15,000.00 to run 'First Steps to Success' which will provide specialist support to help 15 adults with Learning Disabilities realise their aspirations, become 'work ready' and/or enter employment.

J has Asperger's and suffers with anxiety. He had some experience of work; he had worked as a cleaner but not enjoyed it and was part of the customer services training programme which also didn't work out as he found working directly with the public escalated his anxieties.

He was referred to FSTS. The Advisor met with J and they identified his goals. They spoke about what he enjoyed, baking and gaming. He understood the concept of work and wanted to work but wanted to do something that he enjoyed. J and the Advisor re-wrote his CV and started to do a lot of preparation linked to job applications and interview skills and techniques.

The Advisor contacted a local gaming company. She sent an email introducing J, what he was good at and some of his challenges but how gaming was one of his passions and asked them to consider him for any future recruitment. They got back to the Advisor very quickly and an interview was set up. The Advisor continued to support J with interview preparation and J attended his interview. The outcome is that J has been offered a role as a Functionality QA Tester.

Huntingdon Town Council '*Supporting Older People Oxmoor Friendship Group*':

Awarded £47,597.00 to expand a friendship group for 100 older people to incorporate healthy eating, exercise, health related issues, raising awareness on vital topics and decreasing social isolation.

Throughout this project case studies have highlighted the impact that sustained, trusted contact is having on older people's lives:

SH lives alone and is usually quite independent. She does not trust many people because of past life experiences. When we contacted her very recently and explained that we were restarting the food, she was delighted as she would get to see Huntingdon Town Council staff (PH) again. She explained that their warm smiles and kindness always makes her happy and how she rarely see's people to talk to. In addition to this, she recently bought a new phone. When a colleague went round to drop the food off, she was very upset as she could not work the phone and did not know how to get her own number. She explained that her phone was the only way she could keep in touch with friends but that she did not know how to get her number to give to them. PH asked if he could help her. She allowed this as she trusts him. He showed her how to get her number and how

her new phone works. She was extremely grateful to PH and thanked him. The trust we have built up with SH has allowed us to step in and help.

One member was very quiet when she first attended a few months ago. She has been coming regularly now and has made some lovely new friendships. One of the volunteers is very good at getting new people talking so we'd purposely asked her to spend some time with this lady (RO). As a result, RO told our volunteer that she really wanted to create a Facebook page as she wanted to connect with family and friends, many of whom live abroad. Our volunteer was amazing and set this account up for her, even taking a picture of her. This then resulted in another lady sitting next to RO asking her to 'add her as a friend' – which RO did. Neither knew how to message but our volunteer showed them both. A new friendship has been formed and both members can now easily connect with one another over social media.

The case studies below outline the importance of providing information, advice and support to carers, which helps to avoid carer breakdowns that can lead to costly ASC interventions.

SF attended for the first time. She is a full-time carer for her husband who has dementia. She said she was very lonely and was unable to have conversation with her husband although his long-term memory is good. As the Dementia Carers Support Group was also taking place in the Meeting Room this week, we were able to introduce Sheila to them. Sheila was able to leave her husband with a friend, so she could access some time and support for herself.

JM has never attended. He felt very happy to attend and agreed to come back weekly. JM struggles to cope with his wife who has the onset of Dementia. He did not think he'd enjoy the group so much. After a chat with his wife VM, she explained that she was bored and lonely. It was explained that by coming to the centre every week, she would be able to mingle with other people and that JM would get some support/company also. Both are now regularly attending.

Other case studies highlight the loneliness many people have experienced through the pandemic: *GM was brought in by her daughter who is her f/t carer on the first session (09.06.21). Her daughter looked relieved that GM would be staying until 3pm. GM commented that she hasn't left the house in 14 months. The impact this must have had on both GM and her daughter, would have been huge.*

SF said she has not been out, not even to shops since covid-19 began. She is a f/t carer for RF who has dementia and craves conversation with other people. She sat with NJ who is also quite new to the group and was anxious about returning, they got along very well, and both agreed to attend weekly.

A video outlining the impact the project has made on the people who attend, and the volunteers can be viewed here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ep96BI6BMTM>

The Edmund Trust 'Young People's Befriending':

Awarded £17,498.00 to expand a befriending service into East Cambs and Fenland, for the benefit of 50 young people with learning disabilities and their families.

This project has been extremely successful in developing self-confidence with the young people they are supporting. The case studies provided show that young people who had previously been too shy to stand in front of other students, gained confidence in the befriending group and were able to talk about themselves and what they liked doing.

Emma Bird, the Head at Meadow Gate School commented: *"I have never seen him engage as much as he did with one of your volunteers Donna".*

Feedback from families

"I just wanted to sing the praises of N (volunteer). I have no idea what suggestions you have sent to the befrienders however I want to draw to your attention to the wonderful WEEKLY contact through the form of a film quiz N has organised for our daughter who has Down Syndrome for the past 3 months or more. I am humbled by the time she has given to organising the quiz. It was wonderful and a great structure for her. If you have any commendations or awards, I would definitely nominate N.

"I have three boys at home all under 13 and all on the spectrum. I am not supposed to allow others into the house and yet I find myself not being able to get to the shops and get essentials that me and my family need. The boys' befrienders have supported us and played with them on the green whilst I did some essential shopping. The advice of the coordinator to contact the Covid community hubs and the food banks have also been of great assistance"

"My son, S, has a befriender from Eddie's and all I can say is it's a wonderful service and vital for our children to help with their self-esteem, independence and happiness. Eddie's took time to find out what befriender would best suit S and then found a perfect match with R (volunteer). It means he can liaise with his befriender and they decide between them the activity they would like to do and the timings etc, giving S the control and choice. S and R have become great friends and talk regularly, this has also been great this last year when face to face meetings haven't been able to happen.

"The family support scheme - a volunteer for us isn't just someone who helps us, they become part of our family. My children both love having a volunteer come to see them and their support is invaluable. Their support enables us to do things that others do without a second thought. Without them, our children miss out. We're a single-parent family and so a volunteer enables me to spend some time one-to-one with my other child. Sometimes they've helped me attend an appointment for the children, giving me extra support to enable me to focus on the appointment and what the professional involved, is asking. Other times, they've kept the children occupied so that I can wash my hair - something incredibly difficult to do when the children are with me as I can't leave them alone to do that simple task. Other times, a volunteer has played games whilst I've cooked tea and literally kept the peace to enable me to do that without a child becoming hurt by the other. I feel very lucky to have been supported by the family support scheme and think it's an amazing resource that continues to make our lives better for having it."

Volunteer feedback

"When I moved to the UK, I started to look for a voluntary job to get to know local people and improve my communication skills. I found Eddie's and received much more than that. I found an organization who does an incredible job supporting families and that really cares about it. I got a lot of support as a volunteer with training and catching up. I also got the opportunity to meet a lovely family with an amazing autistic boy. They opened their house to me and always let me be comfortable. During my work, I invented games, watched cartoons, played in the garden and learned a lot with this child's little steps. Meanwhile they could manage to do small tasks such as going to shop, cook dinner or just enjoy a cup of coffee. We usually don't think about how hard it is to do it with a disabled child and without support and how it is important to them to have a break. I'm grateful to Eddie's and this family for giving me this chance to grow and learn through empathy and care."