

Appendix A – Case Study for the MHSWS - ‘Victoria’

This is an example of the positive Social Work that has been achieved with an individual who has been supported by the **Older People’s Mental Health Service (OPMH)** over the past two years.

Background

The OPMH social work team became involved with ‘Victoria’ following referral from her Community Psychiatric Nurse (CPN) in 2022. At the time, Victoria had recently been discharged from mental health hospital and she was eligible to receive after-care services in line with s.117 Mental Health Act 1983.

Victoria is an older person with a diagnosis of Bipolar Disorder and was reported to be very vulnerable and unpredictable when unwell; with excessive spending and risk taking behaviour in terms of her relationships with others and substance use.

The referral advised that Victoria’s relationship had ended recently as a result of her mental health needs. Victoria was therefore about to become homeless within the next month as the tenancy of her home had been given up. Victoria’s family were requesting that a further Mental Health Act assessment took place and that she return to the mental health hospital. They strongly expressed their view that it was not safe for her to remain in the community; that she could not function independently and that she would be at high risk without constant support.

Interventions

It was agreed that an **Adult Social Care Assessment** was appropriate as Victoria may have care and support needs and she consented to this. Victoria was allocated to a social worker who completed the first assessment visit jointly with the CPN a few days later. The aim of this visit was to start to build a relationship with Victoria and to consider her **social care and aftercare needs under the Care Act and also the Mental Health Act (s. 117 aftercare)**.

The social care assessment focused on what was important to Victoria and she highlighted that she felt she needed some support with her housing and finances. She advised that she lacked confidence in herself and was aware that her family believes she should be in hospital. The social worker considered with Victoria if she had capacity to manage her finances, particularly how this may fluctuate when she is unwell, and Victoria agreed to a **mental capacity assessment being undertaken to explore her capacity for financial decisions**. Plans were also made to gather information from the District Council’s housing team, Victoria’s family and the DWP about Victoria’s finances and housing options. Victoria engaged well with initial visits with the social worker and joint outcomes were agreed as initial priorities. The social worker ensured that Victoria was given action points after each meeting to support

her in developing her own confidence and building her skills. She responded well to this approach and grew in confidence. Through open discussions with the social worker, Victoria was able to highlight how important it is to her for people to be open and honest with her. She also recognised that she does not like to be told what she can and cannot do. Victoria identified that **she wanted to live in her own property but recognised that she had not been able to achieve this so far and was worried she would soon be homeless.**

Care and Support planning

The social care assessment identified the risks to Victoria and it **focused on her strengths**. Together with the social worker, Victoria was able to consider what indicators there may be that her mental health was deteriorating and what steps she could do to support herself if these occurred. Victoria was considered eligible in terms of care and support under the Care Act 2014 as well as related to s. 117 Mental Health Act 1983 aftercare. The social worker has highlighted in their assessment that they used a **task centred approach** together to support Victoria in tackling tasks at a time to minimise stress. They recognised that support was needed to prevent her being re-admitted to hospital.

Care and Support planning included liaison with the **housing** team. The social worker advocated for Victoria, highlighting her needs and the significant risks if she were to become homeless. A hostel accommodation was initially offered but it was recognised, as a result of social work intervention that Victoria would be at high risk of harm in this setting. An offer of **supported housing** was then made and Victoria was supported by the social worker to visit the property, get to know the support staff and to make a decision to move there. The social worker supported her both practically and emotionally with the move.

The social worker worked closely with Victoria's CPN to ensure that she was well supported and, by working together, this ensured a joint response and close support.

Another aspect of the care and support plan was to ensure that **risks related to financial exploitation** were reduced. The social worker established that Victoria had capacity to manage her finances generally but that when she became more elevated in her mood, she quickly lost capacity to make financial decisions and would be at risk. Through honest and open conversations within their trusting relationship, she was able to recognise that she needed some support to maintain control of her finances and an **appointeeship was considered as a safeguard** in case needed. **A referral to Money Carers was made.** The social worker supported Victoria to **apply for relevant benefits** and also supported her to **access a community fund** to provide her with some finances in the interim before her benefit application was successful.

Initial Review

A **joint s.117 Mental Health Act 1983 review** was undertaken initially with Victoria, her CPN, psychologist and the involved psychiatrist. This was then followed up with a **review of the care and support plan**. Victoria was living alone within the supported accommodation independently, was building positive relationships and was partaking in voluntary work. She was managing all daily living tasks independently. Victoria showed really good awareness of her own needs.

Future plans were considered with Victoria in terms of the next steps after she left the supported accommodation. She was proud of herself and her independence.

Annual Review and end of Involvement

The social worker reviewed the current support plan recently. It was recognised that **all outcomes had been achieved and Victoria no longer required on going social care input**. She remains living in supported accommodation and they are supporting her to apply to move on from there when she is ready. No further role for social work identified in terms of Care Act 2014 or Mental Health Act 1983 (s117 after care) so agreed that social work will close input at this time. Victoria is happy for social work to be invited to future s. 117 reviews jointly with the health team and is aware of how to contact the service if required.