



Building a Bridge ...into independent adulthood and a brighter future
Bespoke, Local, Person Centred and Small Support organisations for young people and families

Partners:



The challenge

- High cost / out-of-area residential, secure, and/or in-patient services with poor outcomes that add to the support a person will need if or when they return home / move on to independent living
- Multiple stakeholders and practitioners challenged to to maintain a focus on the whole person
- The lack of local organisations rooted in local communities able to support people with very individual, often complicated support needs
- The rising numbers of young people with multiple complicated support needs; traumatic histories, mental health, learning disabilities, learning difficulties and/or autism, exclusion
- Without a 'different offer' of support many of this group of young people will move into adulthood, needing support from many different local agencies and a life with little hope of better days.



What is a Small Support Organisation?

Supporting people across ages with complicated lives, traumatic life histories, experiences of institutionalisation and complicated support needs

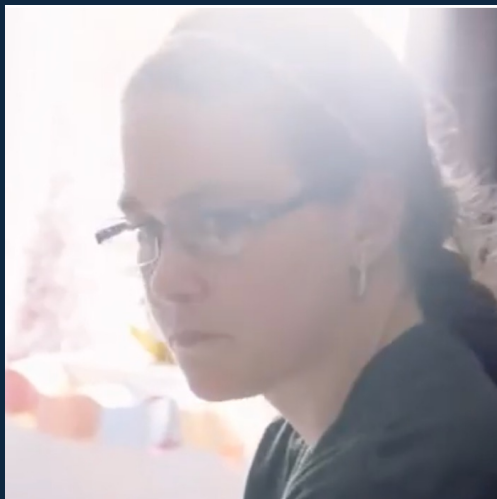
Supporting people 'to move out of / or at risk of being placed in', a secure/forensic long-stay institution

Funded by the NHS England MH LD & Autism team

- The person and their loved ones are at the centre
- A team of people recruited to support the person
- A home of their own
- Investment in positive and supportive relationships
- A person-centred approach to safeguarding and risk
- The small support organisation becomes the one consistent partner to the person in the middle of multiple stakeholders, decision makers and other agencies
- Investing local area – efficient use of limited funding



Building a Bridge into adulthood



Louise

We are being approached by more and more children and young people's services; a desire to think about whole life focused support for young people, and a discussion about small supports for families where the focus is on sustaining (*where appropriate*) families:

Building a Bridge: bespoke and person-centred support for under 18's that stays with them as they move on from institution or family into an independent adult life

Building on an established evidence base of sustainable small local support organisations for people with complicated lives and support needs, and the NHS England funded work over the past two years

- New small support organisations able to support young people through the move on and into adulthood, staying with them
- New family centred small support organisations – bespoke family centred support with a core outcome of supporting the family to be a family and in turn support their family in ways that work for them and the family member

Stability, Safety, Reliability, Respect, Affirmed ...building blocks for a more positive adulthood and a better life



Why 'small'?

"Where, after all, do human rights begin? In small places, close to home – so close and small that they cannot be seen on any maps of the world. Yet they are the world."

Eleanor Roosevelt

Partners with their roots in the closure of Lennox Castle long stay Institution, Glasgow, 1990's

- Rooted in local communities, commitment to building sustaining 'relationships', and remaining small
- Central effort on developing and sustaining positive and supportive relationships with the whole team and the person – everyone knows everyone



Cost & Benefit Analysis

[Click Here](#)

Evaluation report 2022

[Click Here](#)

Research evidencing
economic impact of local
investment

[Click Here](#)

Research about recruitment
and retention of workforce

[Click Here](#)

Lunchtime Sessions

April – What does Good Look
Like?

May – Living Library

June – New Small Supports

July – The Business case -
Plymouth

[Click here](#)

Case Study – Moving into Adulthood

Gerard was a mid-adolescence bundle of risks and vulnerabilities, living in the north. Risks included some to others, as well as risks to himself. Everyone was worried about him and what would happen, because something would; it was only a matter of time.

He had a list of diagnostic categorisations, including autism and ADHD. He was variously described as hard to reach, oppositional and aggressive. Nothing had worked and the risks were increasing.

In amongst all this Gerard was almost invisible. He sat hiding, monk-like, in a black hoody, with no home, no family, no meaning and no purpose other than survival. He had fallen out of education and was, at best, sofa-surfing. He had a well established distrust of public service people with (as he saw it) their clipboards and assessments and nothing positive to offer.

Before a 'small supports' provider became involved Gerard was well known to:

- The council's children and families team
- Child & adolescent mental health services
- Police: the police involvement was partly about concern for Gerard being in vulnerable situations and partly about risks to others

The challenge was to reduce the risks of Gerard being seriously hurt or ending up in the institutional care system. Simultaneously, it was also to engage with Gerard in a way that he could accept that that could instil a belief that a more hopeful future was possible.

Outcomes

More efficient use of limited funding

Better lives for people

Positive impact of local investment

Challenges re recruitment...better retention and much more positive working environment as reported by teams

Work underway to investigate financial costs – Small Supports and alternatives, and the long term impact on collaboration and working together - Plymouth

The children and families team contacted a 'small supports' provider and introduced them to Gerard. They met him 'where he was' and asked nothing of him. They believed in him and did their best to show this in the way they worked alongside him, building trust very, very slowly. The council allocated an individual budget.

The first step was to find him immediate temporary accommodation, in a place he wanted to visit, while matching him with someone from the 'small supports' provider and working with the social worker and housing association to find him safe accommodation. Unusually the support organisation agreed to hold the tenancy on Gerard's behalf, with the council paying for this, as he was not old enough to be a tenant or receive housing benefit.

The support provider listened really attentively to find out who he was and who he wanted to be. They matched people who could help him on the way. The first housing found for Gerard proved to be unsafe, so work was done with the housing association to help him move. Each time there has been a change, it has been a step up (in the past he had so many steps down).

A police liaison officer worked closely with the support provider: they kept in close touch if Gerard went missing or was thought to be in a vulnerable situation. Police involvement shifted over time from law enforcement to welfare.

Over time Gerard took his hood down and looked supporters in the eye. As he began to feel safer, and saw value in the way his life was going, he became more reluctant to jeopardise that. He began to see a future. Within three years he had started college; he met his girlfriend there. Social workers kept in touch; as Gerard became an adult there was a smooth handover of his individual budget and social work contact. He was also able to take on his own tenancy.

As life changed, Gerard needed less and less support; eventually he and the support provider recognised that support was getting in the way. The support provider is no longer supporting Gerard and believes he is living his good life.

C-Change, the small support organisation that shared this example is based in Glasgow, the organisation is registered to provide support to children, young people and over 18's, hence they can smoothly continue to support a person across the move into adult social care.

'Quotes' from a recent interim evaluation of Small Supports work in Leeds

"...nothing is locked, just the front door and I have the key!....no one saying 'no'...it's my space, more independent." (Individual).

"I wanted it all to tie in...the carpets to go with the paint and the curtains to match it all....and my pictures, it all had to go together." (Individual).

It used to make me really anxious...I'd fall out with people having to share the space, especially the kitchen. It's so much better...I am calmer here." (Individual).

"My neighbours are nice...introduced myself. People keep themselves to themselves...just how I like it. Quiet." (Individual).

"I didn't want to tell her on the phone, so I surprised her [step-mum]....I am on the bus route, so it was easy enough to get there..." (Individual).

"I have so many plans, I am always thinking about the future...I want to use the money I make from making things for driving lessons and then, eventually, to buy a car....I know I can do that here..." (Individual).

"Having my own kitchen has been good...I can go in and cook when I want. No one interrupts...I love to bake; it helps me distress....I like to cook as well, but I need to learn to cook more than pasta though...my staff are helping me with that." (Individual).



Building a Bridge

Small Supports for young people

More information about the programme of work

Three years of funding from NHS England LD & Autism Team 2022-2025

Contact: Nic Crosby
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- Developing a local offer of bespoke, local and person/family centred support for young people and their families
- Core focus of ‘building a bridge’ into adulthood
- Supporting the use of person-centred service design and personal planning
- Making good use of personal budgets, individual service funds, procurement and commissioning
- Recruiting champions keen to establish a small support organisation
- Supporting new organisations from the start, through set up, registration and meeting a first person
- Evaluationplan, deliver, learn and revise





Bespoke, Local, Person Centred and Small

The Small Supports Programme – Children, Young People and Families

Partners:

