



Welcome to another edition of the South Tyneside newsletter. We've been a busy bunch this past month: assisted by our wonderful team of volunteer remote link workers, we have made over 3000 contacts as part of our COVID-19 welfare calls. We have also welcomed 5 new staff members to the team, each bringing a wealth of diversity in their experience and backgrounds. In this newsletter we would like to introduce you to our new faces, share an inspiring story from our High Intensity User project and share some amazing feedback which we have received from the people we work with. We hope you enjoy the newsletter - stay safe and stay positive!

The Impact - Our People

As a person-centred organisation, the positive impact of our work is best illustrated through the people we support and the changes they see in their day-to-day lives. Today's story comes from our High Intensity User Secondary Care service.

Meet 'Ellie'

Background:

Ellie was referred to the High Intensity User service following an overdose and thoughts of taking her own life. She had a poor relationship with her family, was scared to leave the house and felt overwhelmed by debt. She had withdrawn from her studies and felt she wasn't able to manage her life. She was angry, upset and had declined to engage with a counselling service.

Support:

With the support of her Psychosocial Link Worker, Ellie established goals to improve her mood, reduce suicidal thoughts and achieve a stable financial situation. She was able to connect to the Citizen's Advice Bureau to apply for the correct benefits, negotiated a repayment plan with the council for rent arrears, and contacted her university to apply for disabled student status in order for them to support her better. When Covid-19 happened, she was supported to deal with paranoid thoughts about the virus and to cope with the disruption it caused.

Achievement:

Ellie is now working part-time and reports this has improved her confidence and given her a sense of purpose. She is able to recognise her own strengths and reflect upon her development. She is practice better self-care through cooking homemade meals, keeping her flat clean and looking after her own appearance. She has an improved relationship with her family. She is using anxiety management techniques and has distanced herself from a destructive relationship.

In her own words: "Today has been good. It's been helpful. I have a realisation, it gets me motivated. It picks me up and keeps me going. [My partner] says I sound different at the end of the call, more positive. I haven't done anything like this before. I trust you."



A New Face - Mark

Hello, I'm Mark and I am really delighted to have joined FCC as a Psychosocial Link Worker in the A Better U team. Changing jobs and employers during COVID was a tricky situation to face but I have well and truly landed on my feet by joining this team and organisation! I'm going to love it, I'm sure.

I have an academic background in applied psychology which has taken me across a range of employment fields including supported housing, vocational rehabilitation, condition management and psychoeducation and diabetes prevention. I have worked for a range of organisations across a variety of sectors and have done 1:1 work but lots of group work too.

I am someone who tries to use challenge and difficulty as a fuel or opportunity to grow, as evidenced by my diagnosis of Type 1 Diabetes in 2016, which during 2018 motivated me to step into diabetes prevention work!

Outside of work, my time generally involves my daughter who has some health needs of her own but she's a great motivator and appears to already have a great sense of humour and a love of music so we get on great. Music is a real passion of mine though I'm much better at listening to it than playing it these days! A favourite lyric of mine by Leonard Cohen from the song Anthem, is "there is a crack, in everything, that's how the light gets in"...that sort of sums up how I see the world around me and provides optimism and positivity."





More new faces!

We are grateful to have been able to successfully recruit using our new virtual recruitment process. We look forward to introducing you properly to each new team member over the next few editions of the newsletter, but for now here is a little hello!



Ragen joins the PCN team as a Psychosocial Link Worker. She brings many years experience working with people who display challenging behaviour and complex needs. She is passionate about improving mental health, equality and diversity.



Tyler joins the ABU team as a Link Worker Coach. Her experience working with vulnerable people and involvement in the Corporate Social Responsibility programme led to her enrolment onto a counselling degree and a desire to empower people to make positive changes in their lives.



A very familiar face for some of us! We recently welcomed Emily back to the South Tyneside team after she left to set up and manage our North Tyneside service. Emily is has joined the PCN team as a Psychosocial Link Worker.

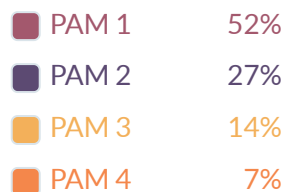
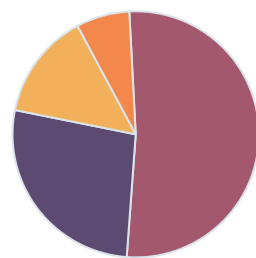


A slightly less new face! We were delighted to welcome Katie into the ABU team as a Link Worker Coach. Katie previously worked in the Newcastle Ways to Wellness service, before deciding to join us in South Tyneside.

Initial PAM scores

High Intensity User Secondary Care

We use either the Patient Activation Measure or the Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale (WEMWBS) on this project. **100%** of service users **improved** their PAM scores over the course of the intervention, achieving an average increase of **8.7** points. The largest increase was an amazing **16** points!



In the words of the people we work with:

"I couldn't have done it without you."

"I have found these calls very useful. Your down-to-earth attitude makes it easy to connect with you."

"Looking back, I can't believe how far we've come together."

"I really feel listened to."

"I can see the areas I need to focus on better now, thanks."

"I feel our chats are always thought provoking."

"I like how you are, not judgemental like others have been."

"I feel like I've really benefited from talking to you. You seem to understand."

"Trust in these sessions means everything to me."

"I feel better for having talked to you, it was helpful."

