



## A big difference with a small intervention

### Councillor John Cotton's story



#### Challenge accepted

Councillor John Cotton, who represents Shard End Ward in the city, took up Birmingham Changing Futures Together's challenge to #walkthefrontline.

The invitation, extended by Natalie Allen, Programme Leader of Birmingham Changing Futures Together, said: "The challenge for the city to support individuals with multiple and complex needs is significant. That is why we invite you to #walkthefrontline with a colleague who works directly with people with multiple and complex needs, helping them address their needs and achieve sustainable change."

#### Enormous difference

I very much enjoyed the day I spent with the team. I was hugely impressed by their passion and commitment to their work, together with their knowledge and expertise in helping some very vulnerable people facing challenging situations.

I was really struck by the way in which a relatively small intervention can make such an enormous difference to an outcome.

a crime to get put back inside straightaway. I have no doubt that he would've done so had we not been there to meet him, take him to a nearby café for a cup of tea and to talk him round.

"By the time we'd finished the tea, we'd tracked down his partner by phone; she'd overslept and was going to meet him in the city centre. The prospect calmed him down. So, for the price of a cup of tea and a bus ticket into the city centre, we'd not only saved the system a significant amount of policing, prison and judicial costs, we'd also ensured that this guy got a chance to start over again.

"Imagine how different things could've been for him ... and how different things could be for many others if we could make more simple interventions like this!

I certainly recommend others walk the frontline. There is simply no better way to understand the challenges and frustrations facing vulnerable people, or the opportunities we have to help them build better lives.

"It's made me think about what I can do better in my role to challenge the system and champion change. I'd definitely do it again!"

**Cllr John Cotton**

#### Helping hand

"Our first visit was to meet a young man who was being released from HMP Birmingham that morning. He has a number of mental health issues and a history of substance misuse. The intention was to meet him at the prison, along with his partner and make arrangements for his accommodation and medical care.

"When we arrived, we found him extremely distressed because his partner had failed to meet him. He said he had nothing to live for because she didn't turn up. He threatened to commit



## The Birmingham Changing Futures Together Programme

Birmingham Changing Futures Together programme improves the effectiveness of service provision to those with multiple and complex needs (homelessness, substance misuse, offending behaviour and mental health) by creating a 'community of support' comprising organisations in the sector, identifying and sharing best practice and establishing new approaches.



### Lead Worker Peer Mentor

Our dedicated Lead Workers, skilled in helping people navigate the support services available, work alongside Peer Mentors with lived experience. This unique combination creates a tailored and empathetic approach, which bridges the gap between the services and those who use them.

### Every Step of the Way

Every Step of the Way is our flagship user involvement and engagement programme. We support, train, enable and empower people with multiple and complex needs to participate in the Birmingham Changing Futures Together Programme.

### No Wrong Door Network

At the heart of the Changing Futures approach, the No Wrong Door Network is a group of organisations working together to ensure service users can access to a whole system of support through one referral.



### Beyond the Basics

This post-programme workstream aims to prevent the "falling away" of support services once an individual is deemed well enough to 'move on'.

## Inreach Outreach

Often the best person to talk to is someone with similar experiences so our Experts by Experience take information on services directly to where the clients are, Crisis Point organisations where they may fall through the gaps, e.g. hostels.



## Psychological informed Environments

We offer training to help our partners develop a PIE, which enables staff to develop reflection skills that help build collaborative, compassionate relationships with service users. Through these relationships service users are more able to develop the skills and beliefs they need to achieve their goals.



Contact the BVSC Birmingham Changing Futures Together team for more information.

[www.changingfuturesbham.co.uk](http://www.changingfuturesbham.co.uk)

