

## Inreach Outreach: supporting the city's most vulnerable

In the midst of the coronavirus crisis, our Inreach Outreach team is working hard to support clients. Sarah and Brian are in regular telephone contact with vulnerable clients, giving mental health and wellbeing support and helping them access support for substance misuse. They check in on clients in supported accommodation, giving them the tools they need to stick to the new rules themselves.

Sarah explained: "We are working hard to support our clients during this incredibly challenging time. Staying in touch is an important part of this. Just checking in on someone, letting them know we are thinking of them as well as offering practical help, can make a big difference.

"We've been in touch with everyone we can via email but lots of our clients don't have access to email, let alone a smart phone with internet access so we are regularly telephoning everyone, some twice or more a week. Information about social distancing and how to stay safe has been circulated but by staying in contact we can talk them through the detail of what they need to do.

*"Substance abuse drop in services may be closed but we've still been able to work with them to get people who are still in addiction, out and about and probably not social distancing onto prescriptions and, if possible, into safe places."*

Sarah is also working with the Newbigin Community Trust, based in Winson Green in the heart of the area they cover. The Trust aims to provide a place of welcome, inclusion and social cohesion for local families. Neighbours can come together at Newbigin House to meet, plan and run community events, and share life together.

"We have worked closely with the Newbigin Community Trust for a while, referring clients to them for support and accommodation," explained Sarah. "In this new environment, we are working with the Trust to support the wider community. Three days a week we prepare hot meals and food parcels, put on gowns and other protective clothing and go out and distribute them. It's a positive way to stay in touch with our clients as well as other vulnerable adults and children and local families and check on them to see how they are doing. We are also providing activity packs for children.

"We also made sure the Easter Bunny visited children who

normally attend the Newbigin Kids Club, delivering 36 Easter eggs!"

Since the start of lock down on 19 March, Sarah and the Newbigin Community Trust have delivered more than 200 food parcels, over 250 hot meals and about 175 craft packs. Everything is left safely on doorsteps, and the team calls ahead to say the meal is on its way and asking the person to stay in. Overall, they have reached 203 individuals (90 adults, 113 children) from 70 households in Winson Green / Handsworth / Smethwick area.

*"This is an incredibly unsettling and difficult time," finished Sarah. "The clients are a joy to work for. They are incredibly appreciative of our efforts, which definitely keeps us going!"*

### The Birmingham Changing Futures Together Programme

Funded by The National Lottery Community Fund, Birmingham Changing Futures Together improves the effectiveness of service provisions 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.

### The No Wrong Door Network

A the heart of the Changing Futures approach, the No Wrong Door Network comprises service providers committed to collectively working together so users benefit from better connected support. People experiencing two or more multiple and complex needs get the support they need 'in the moment'. Safe and looked after, they are able to move away from the immediate risk of crisis.

### Inreach Outreach

Often the best person to talk to is someone with similar experiences so our trained staff with Lived Experience partner with Experts by Experience to take information to services directly where the clients are, crisis point organisations where they may fall through the gaps.

### Every Step of the Way

The service is delivered by Birmingham MIND and is a service user involvement workstream, and part of the wider programme, Birmingham Changing Futures Together. The service provides encouragement and enables Experts by Experience to get involved in a range of opportunities within the programme, which in turn contributes to systems change.

### No Wrong Door Navigator

The service provides hands-on support to service users, accompanying them to the right door, wherever they present. Standing by their side, the Navigators also support service users to attend their referral appointments and advocate on their behalf to ensure they are treated with dignity and respect.