

The trusted person approach

What is Changing Futures?

Changing Futures Cambridgeshire & Peterborough is about improving outcomes for people with multiple disadvantage. Multiple disadvantage means someone experiencing three of five of homelessness, mental health issues, substance misuse, domestic abuse and offending behaviour, at any one time. Changing Futures does this by encouraging involvement of people with lived experience at all stages of our system and service design and looking at how our partnerships affect people.

Background

The trusted person approach has been developed with people with lived experience of multiple disadvantage. They described getting better outcomes by only having to tell their story, needs and wishes to a few people, and preferably a person they know and trust; someone they choose to tell their story who is empowered to share that information with the parts of the system that can act.

One person described telling their story to someone who went away and spoke to the rest of the services to get in place what they needed. They said that if they had found that person the first time around, rather than the seventh or eighth, it could have stopped ten years of addiction and homelessness. That was the only way to break the cycle.

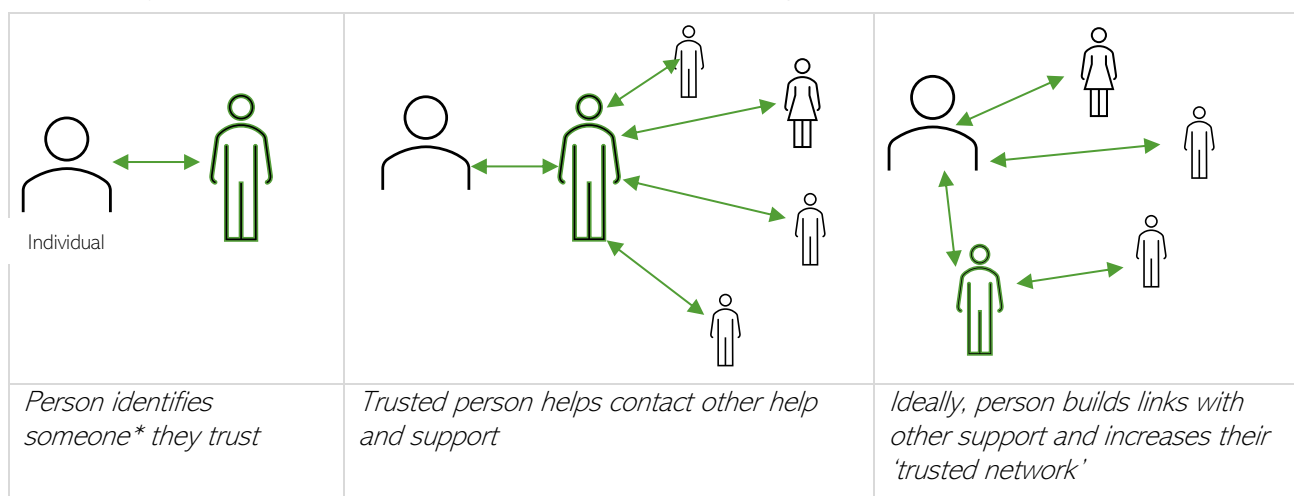
The approach aims to reduce the time an individual spends struggling with the disadvantages they face. If the person is not getting what they need, agencies need to work together to put things right as soon as possible - not as a last resort when everything else has failed.

Many people ask for help and say what they need, but the systems to provide that help are set up in ways people find difficult to access. The trusted person approach aims to help cut through some of these barriers. You can find case studies showing how the approach can be put into action [here](#).

Who is a Trusted Person?

A trusted person is someone who has developed a relationship based on trust with a person facing multiple disadvantage. The relationship may be professional, social or voluntary. A trusted person can act on the information provided by the individual and to pass it to other services who can help.

A trusted person might have a role representing an individual in their dealings with supporting agencies. They may or may not provide support and hand-holding to the individual; this will vary from person to person. But the trusted person is someone the individual is comfortable talking to.

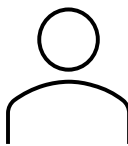




A trusted person is not expected to take on additional responsibility, other than to communicate with other services and feed back to the individual what is happening. It can take time to build trust, but we believe trust can grow, and hope the individual will, in time, build a network of people they trust.

The trusted person may also want to discuss with the individual the best **ways** to deliver any interventions. They are someone the individual can trust to be non-judgemental and to act on their behalf if needed, to help them get what they need in a better way.

* Note: we have used the phrase “trusted person” in this note – however this might not be just one individual. It could also be a group of people, a place or service or an organisation where an individual feels safe and comfortable. For example their local day centre, probation office or Job Centre. Trust can be more about the place than one specific individual. However to keep the concept simple we found it easier to talk about a trusted person. It is what the people with lived experience who outlined it, named the approach.

The benefits

<p>...to the individual</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I only have to tell my story once. • I can access the treatment, care, support and housing I need • I am dealt with sensitively • The person I deal with understands the effects of trauma in my past 	
<p>...to services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We communicate better with other services • We understand the limitations placed on the other services we work with • We have clear goals, set by the person we are working to help • We know & understand what other services are doing so our works aligns • We don't duplicate effort • Our resources are better targeted and we time our actions better, co-ordinating with other services • Our teams feel less isolated when dealing with an individual who has complex issues, and share responsibility, with the help of the trusted persons coordinator 	
<p>...to the system</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We see fewer repeat returners • Our costs are reduced as we deal with fewer emergencies, these being replaced by a greater number of planned actions • Barriers are identified, understood, acted on and removed 	

But we already do this!

The trusted person approach is NOT a new role, and it is NOT a new team. There are a number of organisations and people already using this, or a similar approach, who have great networks and work with customers in a trauma-informed and person-centred way. The aim from *Changing Futures* is to:

- enable the approach to be spread wider, so this is the first response when an individual with multiple disadvantage approaches us – not a last resort when everything else has failed
- use this approach routinely and at an early stage across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough when anyone encounters someone facing multiple disadvantage - so that wherever someone approaches for help and support there is a route to find it
- make sure services can act as a team in the best interests of the individual - and no one service is left to do everything.

To find out more

You can e-mail the Changing Futures team at changing.futures@cambridgeshire.gov.uk or visit our [web page](#)