# Q&A on the trusted persons 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.

This note sets out some questions and answers around the Trusted Person approach. Please do get in touch if you have questions, you would like answered.

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| Q | Where did the trusted person approach come from? |
| A | 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, their needs and wishes to someone they know and ‘trust’ - someone they choose to tell their story. And this would mean repeating their story as few times as possible. |
| Q | What is a trusted person and what do they do? |
| A | The trusted person is empowered to act on information given by a person who faces multiple disadvantage, or to pass their story on to relevant services who are best placed to intervene.  A trusted person may - or may not - be providing support to the individual. They are a person who a person with multiple disadvantage has chosen to talk to.  A trusted person is not expected to take on additional responsibility, other than to communicate to other services. |
| Q | What is expected of a trusted person? |
| A | There is an expectation that the trusted person and the individual will get help in areas they are not responsible for, as awareness for that need becomes apparent. A trusted person may also discuss with the individual the best way 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 and more timely way.  They can be a key worker or manager in a statutory, commissioned or voluntary organisation, and equally they can be in a paid role or a volunteer. They will most likely emerge, be found or step forward for this task. They cannot be “allocated”. They don’t have to be employed by a service provider or large organisation. They do not need to be an ‘expert’ |
| Q | Who can be a trusted person? |
| A | The trusted person can…  Be someone the person with multiple disadvantage has chosen to talk to  Be a key worker or manager in a statutory, commissioned or voluntary organisation  Be in a paid role or a volunteer  Emerge, be found or may step forward for the task  They do not have to….  Be employed by a service provider or large organisation  Cannot be “allocated”  Be an ‘expert’  Ideally, they will be a person who…  Can receive and handle confidential information from service providers, as agreed with the individual and the service provider.  Knows or can get to know the individual’s story, building this knowledge as time goes by, so they can help avoid the individual having to repeat their story to every service provider.  Can act as a bridge between services and the individual, allowing a flow of information that might not otherwise happen. |
| Q | Who becomes a trusted person? Does the trusted person become someone’s advocate while retaining some form of professional accountability? In other words, this trusted person can’t be Joe Bloggs from down the pub? |
| A | The trusted person emerges from the person’s existing network. Simply sitting someone down and asking them who it is does not work as they might well identify their abuser, for example. So it is a collective discussion with services which includes the opinions of the person. It’s unlikely to be Joe Bloggs from down the pub but potentially could be Mr Postie who delivers my letters or Mrs Chemist where I visit to pick my prescription, so a professional accountability remains.  People with lived experience have described getting better outcomes by having to tell their story, their needs and wishes to as few people as necessary; people they know and trust; someone they choose to tell their story. This trusted person (or people) is empowered to act on this information or pass it on to the services which are best placed to help. A trusted person may or may not be providing support to the individual. They are a person who the individual talks to.  A trusted person is not expected to take on additional responsibility, other than to communicate to other services. |
| Q | Can I only have one trusted person? |
| A | No. The ambition is that a person will be able to trust and access all the services and people they need. However, often at the start of the journey there may only be one or two people they feel able to approach. This person or people become trusted as the journey continues.  The trusted person can seek help from a trusted person’s coordinator who helps the trusted person link the individual to other parts of the system.  It may not be an individual, but a service that is trusted. So the individual’s point of contact is a place they trust and feel safe, such as a day centre. They may see a different person at the service each time but trust that organisation to tell what it is they need. |
| Q | What happens if the trusted person isn’t around? For instance if the individual has identified their trusted person, and isn’t ready to expand their trusted network and then the trusted person goes off sick? Is there scope for a back-up trusted person? |
| A | The Changing Futures team can re-evaluate the network and start again because these things can’t be helped. The goal is always to expand the number of people who are trusted within that person’s network. There might be scope for a back-up trusted person but they’d need to be within the person’s network. |
| Q | What support can a trusted person get? |
| A | Where a trusted person is more experienced and has a well-developed network already, they may not need much support. Where a trusted person is less experienced and has a less developed network, it’s likely a trusted person coordinator or trusted person champion will need to provide a higher level of support and input. |
| Q | What is a trusted persons coordinator? |
| A | There are three trusted person coordinators employed in the Counting Every Adult team (which sits with the rest of the Changing Futures team), who support and enable trusted people across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough. |
| Q | What is a trusted person champion? |
| A | The trusted person approach will only work if service providers recognise and support it.  The Changing Futures team is proposing that each organisation has a ‘champion’ who helps their organisation adapt to the model and provide support trusted people, with help from the Changing Futures team, especially the trusted person co-ordinators.  These champions will promote the model and help their organisation adopt it, including an organisation wide trauma-informed and person-centred approach wherever that needs strengthening. |
| Q | My organisation already follows this kind of approach - how is Changing Futures helping? |
| A | The aim from Changing Futures is to  Spread this approach wider, so this becomes the first response when an individual with multiple disadvantage approaches – 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, there is a route to find the help and support they need  Make sure services can act as a team in the best interests of that individual - and no one service is left to do everything |
| Q | Can I find out about some practical examples of how the approach is working? |
| A | Case studies have been written up to show how the model can be put into action, which you can find here <https://cambridgeshireinsight.org.uk/changing-futures-cp/> |
| Q | What if the individual needs a greater amount of support than can be offered by the trusted person? |
| A | The approach is intended to allow doors to be opened to treatment and services when an individual approaches any part of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough system.  The intention is to reduce the amount of doors a person needs to knock on themselves - and to reduce the number of times those doors are closed, having been offered a signpost.  The Trusted Person approach is not intended to provide additional support or handholding to people – partners across the system still need to provide this individual specialized support. |
| Q | How can we be sure that the information a trusted person gives is accurate? |
| A | It is always difficult to know how accurate information received from a third party is. The trusted person approach cannot test this, it is aimed at reducing the times a person must repeat the same thing and also ensuring support needs reach the right services. We need to have professional trust in one another, though there will always be times when we will have to ask something that is already known for safety or legal reasons, such as how much of a substance someone is using in order to accurately prescribe. Our experience is that when I person does not seem to respond to services or support offered in the manner that a trusted person has outlined, then it might be that the information given does not actually represent the views of the person. |
| Q | Does being a trusted person go beyond a job role? What if I end in my role and was a Trusted Person? |
| A | If a Trusted Person leaves their role, there will be time to do a planned handover to another person who is trusted, possibly calling on support already around them. |
| Q | How would someone choose their trusted person? |
| A | Think who would you go to if you wanted some help, guidance or advice.  I might choose someone who has some expertise in the area I am thinking about – if it’s multiple disadvantage, a good person might be someone already providing advice who might be able to guide me to the support needed. For example, if 10 or more professionals are working with me, the person I share most with might be my trusted person and they might then help communicate my needs to other teams. |
| Q | What if there is no one the individual trusts? |
| A | It’s an organic thing – if someone has a trusted person that’s great. If there is no trusted person, the CEA coordinators can step in, perhaps temporarily.  Any organisation can help an individual identify who it is that they trust. The person might reach out at the moment when they need or want to connect and seek help. Equally, an agency might have concerns about an individual and CEA gets involved to reach out to them |

## To find out more about Changing Futures

You can e-mail the team at [changing.futures@cambridgeshire.gov.uk](mailto:changing.futures@cambridgeshire.gov.uk) or visit our [web page](https://cambridgeshireinsight.org.uk/changing-futures-cp/)