

Case study: Mitch

What is Changing Futures?

Changing Futures Cambridgeshire & Peterborough is about improving the outcomes for people with multiple disadvantage. This will be achieved by people with lived experience guiding professionals on how organisations across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough can work together more effectively and efficiently to tackle 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.

Mitch's story highlights ways partners have worked together in a trauma informed way, particularly housing and probation services.

Background

Mitch was evicted from his accommodation with Amicus. He is now homeless but staying with his parents. Mitch is using alcohol daily, cannabis and possibly class A drugs. His paranoia impacts him staying at his parents as it affects them and it also causes him to shout at their neighbours. He cannot remain there indefinitely.

Who is involved?

- Marie (Changing Futures Trusted Person Coordinator)
- Lee (Liaison and Diversion Service, LaDS)
- Adam (Huntingdonshire District Council, HDC)
- Viola (Probation Officer)
- Pippa (P3 mental health support worker)

Meeting Mitch

Mitch has been given temporary accommodation by Huntingdonshire District Council (HDC) at a B&B in Peterborough until a more local place becomes available.

Marie (Changing Futures) met with Mitch – he has no trusted person in place as he doesn't trust any professionals. Marie undertaken to act as his trusted person for now.

Mitch is working with Lee at the Liaison and Diversion Service (LaDS). Marie will support Mitch until he is able to establish connections and create his own support network). Mitch has to visit his probation officer weekly; Marie will go to an appointment with Mitch to help build this relationship as well.

Homeless?

Mitch lost his previous accommodation with Amicus due to antisocial behaviour and smashing a window. Having contacted other professionals that know Mitch, it was agreed the Amicus accommodation was not appropriate because of Mitch's mental health needs.

HDC was minded to make an “intentionally homeless” decision. CEA bring the professionals involved together and discuss Mitch’s needs, especially how his mental health affects him. HDC accept this assessment and will accept him as a priority need and continue to accommodate him at the B&B.

Life in bed and breakfast

Some issues arise at the B&B

- Mitch is not staying at the B&B
- He uses candles in his room
- He is not paying service charge when required
- Mitch has a weapon in his room.

Mitch has had letters about these issues but has not really responded, so Marie discusses the concerns, explains the consequences and outlines what Mitch needs to do. Without this it is likely that Mitch would possibly ignore the letters and be evicted.

Mitch contacts Marie frequently with any issues and concerns he has; this is something he would not have done before would have likely just ignored things until they got much worse or he lost the accommodation. Marie explains the reason he had to move rooms (because he was initially in a family room and they had a family coming in). Mitch would have ordinarily thought that it was the B&B getting at him for a reason, increasing his paranoia, which could have meant he would have left the accommodation thus ending his homelessness duty and losing the opportunity to have his own place. Having a person that Mitch trusts in place has helped Mitch to see why he needed to move rooms and trust that it was for a genuine reason.

Mental health assessment

Lee writes to Mitch’s GP to ask for another mental health assessment and what support can be put in place as he is hearing voices. Lee is willing to take Mitch to appointments but gets no response to the letter so Marie suggests that Lee make an appointment with Mitch and takes him to the GP.

The B&B issues Mitch with a final warning for having a knife in his room. the staff entered when he was asleep and took it.

Marie emails Adam to ask if HDC can secure any other suitable accommodation for Mitch as he says he has been robbed at knifepoint at the accommodation. Mitch also relates that staff keep entering his room even when he is asleep. So Marie visits the B&B and speaks to the manager about entering his room.

The B&B has to check the rooms once a day, Mitch is asleep in the day so does not answer so they enter the room. Marie explained this is not acceptable for Mitch due to his paranoia etc and the B&B agrees to arrange a time for the staff to enter the room as agreed with Mitch, provided HDC emails to say that this needs to happen due to Mitch’s mental health. Mitch would also like a room at the back of the building, if possible, to be away from all of the noise at the front.

Adam at HDC agrees to email the accommodation to ask for timed room checks and for Mitch to move rooms.

Assault

Mitch was assaulted near to the accommodation and has lost teeth and had to go to hospital,

Adam finds alternative accommodation but Mitch does not want this.

Mitch misses his appointment at CGL as he doesn't feel up to going, due to the assault.

Mitch has been asked to leave the accommodation due to having knives in his room. He has been placed in another B&B in a nearby town. Mitch could have lost the accommodation, but Marie explained his vulnerabilities so HDC agreed to keep him in accommodation.

However Mitch is struggling in the new accommodation so Adam at HDC agree he can stay at his parents if they agree, and this will not impact his A-band priority on the Home-Link system (usually if someone is not staying in the temporary accommodation the duty is ended).

Lee at LaDS agrees to visit, and Mitch decides to start the process of Home-Link and contact the GP to ask for an appointment

Growing concerns

Concerns are raised by Viola (Mitch's probation officer) as she has seen him crouched in the road using his fingers as a gun to fire at passers-by. Information reflected to Lee at LaDS about his worsening mental health. Professionals meeting arranged to discuss this.

Adam has been able to find Mitch self-contained temporary accommodation and Mitch moves in – however he is arrested the same day for threatening someone in the street and is remanded to court.

Marie attends court to speak to the solicitor and the magistrates. Court agrees to adjourn for a psychological report to understand how Mitch's mental health is affecting him and potentially contributing to his offending and what could be a useful sentence to minimise this. Probation had been asking for this for ages, but due to CEA attending court it has now been agreed.

Self-contained accommodation and some support

Mitch is back in the self-contained accommodation and feels settled and safe there. Marie refers Mitch to P3 to support with sorting out utilities and paying bills at the new temp. P3 allocate Mitch to Pippa, their new mental health support worker who will have more time to work with him.

Adam is in regular contact with Marie about what Mitch needs to do. Having CEA as the link helps make sure that nothing is missed such as Mitch does forget things and doesn't always open his post and does not respond to calls from people. Mitch is answering and maintaining contact with Marie.

Catch up with solicitor, psychologist in place now but waiting for money to be agreed by legal aid.

Marie visits Mitch with Viola. Noticed a knife on the side as they left. Mitch was talking about his phones being hacked by others, and this was stopping them from charging and also the hackers stop him from being able to make calls or send texts. Marie and Viola talked to Mitch about his mental health and the impact it has on him. Mitch said that his mum could talk to the psychologist but only if he is present.

Police make contact as Mitch has reported the incidents now where he was assaulted.

Safeguarding referral made due to the assaults and risk that Mitch has been known to carry a knife with him.

Mitch makes contact with Lee at LaDS and agrees to LaDS assessing his mental health. Mitch has previously missed the meetings with LaDS and has not responded to calls or texts but he called them himself this time.

Mitch missed the rearranged appointment with Pippa at P3 as he missed the bus. However he agrees to have another appointment with Pippa at the probation office, with Viola present. This shows how much the relationship has built between Mitch and Viola.

Mitch agreed to have an assessment with CGL if CEA come with him and this is arranged.

Some highlights

- P3 letting CEA / probation fill out their risk assessment form to speed up the process of seeing him.
- HDC allowing Mitch multiple options in temporary accommodation without ending the homelessness duty and understanding his needs.
- HDC allowing Mitch to stay at his parents' home and not in the TA without ending duty.
- HDC looking for an individual TA placement for Mitch due to his needs.
- CGL arranging a late appointment to accommodate Mitch's needs.
- CEA appealing the decision to find Mitch intentionally homeless, Mitch would not have been able to do this himself and so would have been homeless again.
- CEA attending court with Mitch and getting the court to agree a 6-week adjournment so that the solicitor to agree to apply for legal aid funding for a private psychological report.
- HDC accommodation in self-contained temporary (advocated for by CEA).
- Meeting Mitch with his probation officer to try and build a better relationship. Mitch is now meeting with probation more frequently and is going to his probation officer for things that he needs when he has not done in the past.
- CEA visiting the temporary accommodation to discuss the issues with staff entering Mitch's room and arranging something different for Mitch that he can cope with.

Useful links to learn more

○ The **5 principles** for Changing Futures are to:

- Recognise complexity
- Build trust
- Open doors (there is no wrong door)
- Meet people where they are
- Embrace learning

○ Read more at our [web page](#)

○ Sign up for 3-monthly newsletter using sue.beecroft@cambridge.gov.uk

○ Join in... This is a learning process, so please ask if you have questions or suggestions. You can find some [FAQs](#) here. Get your question added so others can benefit from your curiosity!