

## **Appendix A – Local Area Coordinator service case studies**

### **Case study 1**

#### **Introduction**

Introduction from Social Prescriber.

#### **Situation**

Young mum with some learning difficulties and mental health, living with her two children, a boy, and a girl. Both children have some low-level mental health needs. Living in a council property, very overcrowded as the property only has two bedrooms, the children are sharing a room. Neither of the children have any privacy or escape from each other. The children are not allowed play dates or sleep overs with friends as the room is too crowded. Mum has not been able to access the council bidding site because of her difficulties.

#### **What happened:**

The problems began when the young mum could not connect to the housing bidding website. Mum has mild learning difficulties, so this made it exceptionally more difficult for her as she was not computer literate and struggled with reading. The mum contacted me because she felt overwhelmed by the process and like she was not getting anywhere with the council.

I met with the young mum, and we discussed the issues that she was having, she was terribly upset and felt that she was not being listened to by the council, she felt as if she was being discriminated against because she was unable to use a laptop. Despite her asking for help she was told that she would have to get someone to help her as there was no staff to support with this. The Mum was struggling so much and becoming so stressed, she was also waiting on test results for a health condition so felt this compounded the issue.

We met up and decided to log on to the council website together and start the process of accessing the housing register. Unfortunately, we hit a hurdle from the off as the lady could not remember any of her log on details. After numerous phone calls to the council and attending in person we finally managed to reset the details. During this time, it became increasingly obvious that the lady struggled when speaking on the phone, she started to get confused and struggled to get her message across. We decided together that I needed to advocate on her behalf, so therefore we composed a letter to the council that gave me signed permission to do this on the lady's behalf. The mum was extremely grateful as she had never got this far before.

We have now started the process of bidding for properties after uploading all the information to help support her case, the lady is fully aware that this may be a long process as she started at the bottom. I have spent many hours with her showing her how to use the bidding process on the laptop so that she can be independent enough to log in and check this weekly. I check in with the lady every week to see how things are going and if she needs any more support.

**What happened next...**

At the moment the lady is checking in every week and looking to see if there are any suitable properties for her and her children, we are mindful of the fact that she is overcrowded, and we do keep reiterating to the council that this is a problem. I help the lady upload any extra information that she gathers and continue to support her with other issues that are affecting her mental health.

We are also exploring the idea of an introductory computer class at the local College to help with updating her skills in IT. I have also introduced the lady to the Mental Health café where she is receiving support with talking therapies.

**➤ Outcome for individual /family**

- Feeling valued and supported
- Accessing local support for Mental Health

**Outcome for community /services /organisation**

- Engagement with local services
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## **Case study 2**

### **Introduction**

A and B were introduced to me by a Rutland County Council worker. They are a married couple in their mid-70's with considerable health issues. They have lived in the locality for several years. They were introduced to me for support with housing. A and B lived in a private rented two bed bungalow in a nearby village. However, the property had a burst watermain flooding the property and damaging their belongings. They obtained private rent via Airbnb while the insurance company and landlord looked at potential repairs. However, the property was found to have asbestos in there and has been on maintenance for around four months.

### **Situation**

A and B are living in an Airbnb in another village. They still have the tenancy in their original village so are unable to apply for housing with their Borough/District Council. The bungalow is still under maintenance with no time scales for completing. The couple are still paying the utilities and liaising with landlord (who lives in Germany) and the insurance companies. The couple have been looking at private rents but cannot afford the fees due to both being on pensions and also have on going medical issues which impacts their daily living.

### **What happened next**

I advised the couple to seek a notice from the landlord that they were terminating their tenancy. This would make them unintentionally homeless and a high priority on the housing list. I also referred them in for care assessment with ASC in support of their application. Following several weeks looking at private rents and housing associations they agreed their best option was MBC housing. Following terminating the utilities at the bungalow they obtained the notice and following being supported to complete the housing application with MBC and also providing all documentation they are now in priority banding and able to bid. They are no longer associated with the bungalow or paying the charges. They are also receiving support from ASC and NHS for health reasons. I have supported them to obtain a blue badge. They continue to live in the Airbnb for now and are able to bid for properties.

### **The future**

A and B have provided further information with LAC support around their health needs for housing. This is in relation to needing a two-bed property as stated on care assessment. I have also submitted a support letter, and we are waiting for the update. LAC will also support them to seek furniture etc when they move into a new property. The couple contacted me to say they had been offered a property and now have moved. They thanked me for my support, but they claim to no longer need my help.

## **Case study 3**

## **Introduction**

I have worked with Mr and Mrs M for some time on and off as they have physical disabilities. They live in a sheltered accommodation where I know the Housing officer. Mr M rang me in August concerned for his friend who had been sleeping on their couch for over a week. I went to visit Mr and Mrs M and their friend Mr S. Mr S had broken up with his partner some time ago and had to move out of the flat they shared as his partner was moving out. Mr S was quite well known around the town as he used to sell guitars and instruments on the Market as well as being a cleaner at two local pubs. Mr S was able to find a new flat to stay in but was not sure about computers so had not applied for the Housing element of Universal credit. Mr S also had no bank account so could not receive benefits directly (his wages were being paid to his ex-partner who passed them on). Mr S got into rent arrears and was unable to access the internet to apply. Mr S was served an eviction notice and left the flat, not knowing what to do or who to turn to. He slept in the pubs he cleaned as well as sofa surfing with friends from across the town.

## **Situation**

I was able to talk to Mrs S and outline some priorities. Mr S needed somewhere stable to stay for a little while so he could continue working and then find his own place. We talked to the housing officer who did not have any vacancies but had a spare room kept for visitors to the scheme. Mr S was welcome to stay further nights at the sheltered accommodation in the guest room. Mr S was receiving meals from Mr and Mrs M but they had a limited income. We were able to support them by applying for foodbank vouchers to supplement what they shared with Mr S.

Mr S needed help to apply for a new house and to access benefits. We were able to assist Mr S with visits to the job centre, applying for ID he needed for applications. We rang the homeless helpline at district council together and spoke to a colleague who I knew well in the homelessness prevention team. My colleague was able to open an application for accommodation for Mr S.

The local Nationwide had a scheme for homeless people to apply for bank accounts and were helpful in setting one up. I helped Mr S to access the internet at the town library so he could check his Universal credit and complete applications. I also kept copies of paperwork and a few items at the library so he would not lose his belongings as he moved from place to place.

## **What happened**

Mr S did have to sleep rough on a few nights as he could not sleep at the sheltered residential scheme for a long time. I continued to support Mr S during these times with a donated sleeping mat and sleeping bag. Mr S was able to access Universal Credit and was able to access food during his rough sleeping period. The local Rough sleeper team were made aware that he was likely to be out rough sleeping and offered any assistance they could.

Thankfully this period only lasted a week or two as my colleague in the Homelessness prevention scheme was able to find him accommodation.

### **What happened next**

I helped Mr S visit a potential new tenancy in a neighbouring village. The tenancy was good as it would be close enough for him to travel by bike into town and continue his cleaning jobs. I helped Mr S to fill in the tenancy forms and to set up in his new home, collecting items from various places that he had used for storage whilst sofa surfing. Mr S felt confident that he would be able to manage his tenancy this time and felt he was able to access support should he have any problems. It was a lot of stress removed from Mr S and his friends who had been supporting him throughout.

I was also able to apply for new white goods using a local charity scheme which meant he was able to secure a cooker, microwave and washing machine. Likewise his friends donated a tv and furniture for his new home. The housing association has a financial support officer that can help Mr S should he struggle with his rent or money in the future.

### **Future**

Mr S is continuing to settle into his new home and the last of the items from town have been brought over to his new home. Mr S is happier now as he can look forward to a warmer winter in his new home.

#### Outcome for individual /family

- Able to maintain job and important relationships through a difficult period.
- Less impact upon his physical and mental health due to reduced time rough sleeping.
- Now independently housed with a manageable budget

#### Outcome for community /services /organisation

- Less dependent upon crisis services
- Less dependent upon benefits.

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