

Step Together UPdate

Welcome from Mark Brown

Welcome to this update from Step Together in Somerset. In this issue we look at some of the amazing feedback we have received from clients, share one of our client's stories and take a look at our psychological way of working.

I hope you enjoy reading about the work we've been doing across Somerset with our partners and the difference we've been able to make to people's lives. ***A huge thank you to our wonderful team and our fabulous partners who make all this possible.***

Mark
Service & Transformation Manager

In March we prepared a report on feedback from clients who have used services or agencies in Somerset over the past five years. Here's a snippet of what Step Together clients had to say:

What our clients say

Brilliant service. Not a bad word to stay. Always in contact, contactable and flexible.

They have bent over backwards to help me. and are always there for me. Crisis Safe Space is brilliant.

Step Together never gave up on me, where others have

Lots of gold stars. Consistent, supportive and always have time to listen.

They were there for me and got me through

Absolutely fantastic. Can't think of any improvements

Other agencies discharge people too quickly especially when they have severe anxiety like me. It's great that Step Together allow time to get to know you and there's not rush.

Our psychological approach

Step Together is fortunate to have not one but two full-time psychologists, Lauren Hawksley and Graham Ball. We caught up with Lauren to find out about the work they're doing to support the team and our clients.

“Graham and I have worked closely with Lesley Fleming, our experienced coach and senior practitioner to set up a number of different spaces to help colleagues develop their **psychological, adversity and trauma informed** approach, which we call our PAT approach for short. These include:

- Formulation – an in-depth psychological exploration of one client
- Restorative space – a space for staff to reflect together on how the works impacts them
- One-to-one reflective space – time to think about clients, processes happening with a client or issues you want to think about in a psychological way.

Through these spaces we hope to contribute to change for clients, change within the ways we work, and change in the wider systems our clients have to navigate and exist within.”

Forging a new path – Connor's story



Christian, one of our recovery coaches, has helped his client Connor (not his real name) make a fresh start, overcoming some serious life challenges.

When they started working together, not only was Connor in arrears with his rent and facing eviction, he was also facing a short custodial sentence following an incident during lockdown. He was depressed and stressed and was smoking a lot of cannabis to deal with it. Despite this, Connor was determined to put the past behind him and forge a new path for himself.

After Connor had completed his short sentence, Christian helped him open a bank account, and set up a payment schedule to pay off his debts. Through Second Step's Connections Fund Connor was able to buy a computer and start back to work training through the Job Centre.

With Christian behind him, believing in him, helping and encouraging him, Connor is now facing a much brighter future. His housing is stable and his mental health has greatly improved, leaving him with the tools he needs to take the next steps.

And in other news...

A common complaint from our clients is about the tedium and upset caused by having to tell and retell their story to professionals. Every time they go into a new service or try to access a new pathway they have to retell their story. It's exhausting.

To address this, Step Together are in the process of drafting a Shared Trusted Assessment - a single, live document which tells the client's story and can be used by all voluntary organisations to avoid people having to retell their story. It will identify successes and challenges, showing progress and what has worked. It's early days, but if adopted by enough agencies, this will be a huge step forward. *A big thank you to Mark who is leading on this important work!*


