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## 1. Avoiding crisis, building resilience, building connections

Anne rang the Local Area Coordinator to ask for help after her partner passed away suddenly. She was very distressed on the phone and felt overwhelmed.

Anne's partner had been her main carer and was the named tenant of the council property they lived in together. He had died suddenly and unexpectedly, with Anne experiencing the trauma of finding him dead in their kitchen - this led to Anne feeling suicidal at times.

Anne also had a number of serious long-term health conditions and explained how these conditions impacted on her daily activity and mobility, such as needing to be on an oxygen machine for 15 hours per day. She had relied heavily on her partner and was frightened about how she would cope without him.

Anne had spoken to someone at the council who told her she would 'need to present as homeless'. She felt anxious and upset as she thought she might be told to leave her home at any time.

In this instance, our Local Area Coordinator:

- spent time listening and empathising, making an immediate plan of action with Anne's input
- helped Anne ring the Housing Management Officer to find out whether she would be able to stay in her home - they advised that she would need to provide evidence she had lived at the property for over a year to succeed the tenancy
- helped Anne gather the proofs she needed to submit her claim to the tenancy and her partner's belongings
- helped Anne initiate a social care assessment and a referral for a warden call system
- offered support alongside a neighbour who provided regular visits, information and emotional and practical support

"I don't know what I would have done without you – you've been a rock and brilliant at helping me sort everything out. If it wasn't for your help I don't think I would be here now – I did think about joining him in that first week after his death."

### Outcomes

- **Avoiding crisis** – Anne was able to remain independent in her home by receiving support to get through the initial difficult time after the loss of her partner; she then received help to make arrangements for longer term support from adult social care

- **Building resilience** – Anne now feels more in control of her life and confident about managing her future; she now feels able to focus on managing her grief
- **Building connections** – Anne is starting to build a support network after making links through her Local Area Coordinator

## 2. A good life, developing financial stability, addressing mental ill health

Elsa was introduced to her Local Area Coordinator at a 'drop-in' having recently been referred to the Community Mental Health Team following deterioration in her mental health. Elsa also had financial difficulties due to a Personal Independence Payment (PIP) claim being declined and was finding it difficult to cope alongside caring for her two children as a lone parent.

Initially, Elsa wanted help to complete another PIP application and the Local Area Coordinator visited her at home to help with the form. On arrival, Elsa presented as unwell, appearing over animated and excessively talkative. She shared that she was awaiting a psychiatric assessment for a suspected bipolar disorder and felt she might be having a manic episode. The Local Area Coordinator spent some time talking with Elsa and judged her to be well enough to engage with completing the application, however, this took nearly six hours to complete over two visits.

Once they had completed the PIP application, the Local Area Coordinator talked to Elsa about her 'vision for a good life'. Elsa explained how her family had been separated for over 9 years as her husband lived in Jamaica and was refused an application to live in the UK despite Elsa challenging the decision through the courts. Elsa said she would love to take her children to visit their father and extended family in Jamaica, but her financial situation was stopping her. The Local Area Coordinator helped Elsa research the cost of a trip to Jamaica and see how it may be possible to finance this if she received a full award and back payment for her PIP claim. Elsa said she would really like to spend next Christmas with her family all together, so the Local Area Coordinator helped Elsa set up a crowd funding page to raise some money quickly.

### Outcomes

- **Addressing mental ill health and a good life** – When Elsa was in the midst of a crisis, she had lost sight of what she wanted out of life. The 'strengths-based' conversations Elsa had with her Local Area Coordinator helped her regain a positive perspective and be hopeful about the future again. This had a considerable positive impact on Elsa's mental health.
- **Developing financial stability** – Elsa received a positive decision regarding her PIP claim. She did not need to attend another assessment and was awarded the full amount for the daily living component, and received a backdated payment. The crowd-funding campaign raised £230 and although she didn't quite get to Jamaica for Christmas, she is planning a trip there for the following year.

### 3. Giving a voice, improving communication, building connections

The Local Area Coordinator saw Allan at a community centre and waved at him as he walked past. Allan made a 'thumbs down' sign, so the Local Area Coordinator went outside to speak to him but was unable to understand what was wrong as he was deaf and used British Sign Language (BSL) to communicate.

The Local Area Coordinator signalled to Sylvia, a local resident who was taking part in craft activities at the centre. The Local Area Coordinator had been working alongside Sylvia with some of her own issues, and knew that Sylvia was doing a BSL course. Sylvia came outside and introduced herself to Allan using BSL. Sylvia was able to act as interpreter, enabling Allan to tell the Local Area Coordinator that he had witnessed some local youths vandalising a nearby cable box the evening before. Through Sylvia, the Local Area Coordinator told Allan that she would visit him at home to get more information. During the visit, the Local Area Coordinator obtained Allan's permission to report this incident to the police.

#### Outcomes

- **Giving a voice** – Allan seemed pleased to have been able to report the vandalism
- **Improving communication** – This incident led to a conversation amongst users of the community centre, several of whom expressed an interest in learning BSL and connecting with other deaf members of the community who were known to them. It also boosted Sylvia's confidence around her own knowledge of BSL
- **Building connections** – Allan was pleased to have met Sylvia and made a new connection. While at Allan's house, the Local Area Coordinator also reconnected with his landlady, who is elderly with health problems, and passed on a flyer about craft sessions at the community centre



**"I feel hopeful about the future for the first time in years."**

#### 4. Building connections, addressing learning disability, improving confidence

Mum Joanne was introduced to her Local Area Coordinator by a 'Christians Against Poverty' (CAP) worker at a drop-in.

Joanne was very worried about her 17 year old daughter Sarah who was suffering from anxiety and depression, and had dropped out of school and college due to bullying. Both Joanne and Sarah had experienced domestic violence from Joanne's former partner, who was still causing problems from a distance.

Joanne didn't have much time to herself as Sarah was afraid to be apart from her for any length of time, which was putting a strain on their relationship. Sarah had received an email from Claire, a Connexions Advisor, but felt unable to engage due to a lack of confidence, and feared Claire would tell her to return to college.

After the initial conversations, the Local Area Coordinator:

- Advised that Claire could visit Sarah at home and there would be no pressure for Sarah to go back to college
- Passed on details of York MIND young people's service, and the 'Young Minds' website to Joanne

Joanne then took Sarah to visit the Local Area Coordinator who went over her options with her in person.

A couple of weeks later, Joanne met up with the Local Area Coordinator to advise that Claire had been in touch and had arranged a meeting with Sarah, and had also made a referral to the counselling service. Joanne shared that she had also discovered that both her and Sarah suffered from dyslexia, so the Local Coordinator provided details of an organisation who could give advice on this.

Joanne also felt that it would be a good time to look at new job opportunities, and the Local Area Coordinator told her about local regular job fairs.

#### Outcomes

- **Improving confidence** – The Local Area Coordinator had the time and space to listen to Joanne's worries and was able to gain an understanding of the complexities of her situation. Joanne's confidence in the Local Area Coordinator meant that she felt able to bring her daughter to meet her the following week.
- **Building connections** – The Local Area Coordinator helped Joanne and Sarah build links with young people's services and learning and employment contacts.
- **Addressing learning disability** – Once Joanne realised that she and Sarah suffered from dyslexia, the Local Area Coordinator ensured they could receive the support they needed by signposting them to a relevant organisation.

## 5. Building connections and overcoming isolation


Claire read about the Local Area Coordination service in a local circular and got in touch via email.

Claire has had ME for many years, which fluctuates between moderate and mild episodes. Claire lives with her partner but they don't spend a lot of time together. Claire is alone at home a lot of the time and has become socially isolated. She has no income (her benefits were stopped when Incapacity Benefit became Employment Support Allowance, and as she has savings, is not entitled to any means-tested benefits). She is not working at the moment and only has one friend whom she sees once a fortnight for a couple of hours.

The Local Area Coordinator visited Claire at home, and chatted about Claire's skills and interests. She discovered that Claire was very interested in family history and had lots of skills from a variety of roles she had previously had. Claire also mentioned that she wanted to find out about joining a dance class and volunteering.

The Local Area Coordinator asked Claire what her perfect day would look like. She answered that she would like to volunteer in something she feels passionate about and in her leisure time, she would love to be able to go swimming.

Claire and her Local Area Coordinator looked at volunteering opportunities locally and Claire applied for a position. She also began helping an elderly neighbour with a learning disability trace his family tree and has started a dance class which she can go along to when she is feeling well enough.



**“If everything I'm planning works out, I think I'll have achieved almost everything I wanted for now - the exercising, dancing, voluntary working.”**

### Outcomes

- **Building connections** – Claire just needed someone ‘in the car’ with her to help her on her journey. Through conversations with her Local Area Coordinator, Claire has built local connections with various groups and individuals
- **Overcoming isolation** – Now Claire has made connections with various groups and got involved in volunteering, she no longer feels isolated at home