



People2People

End-point feedback report by the University of Bristol

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Key learning points: How social work practice has developed at People2People (P2P)

1. Peer support

People2People (P2P) has set up a peer support programme bringing local people who use services and carers together with clients and carers from P2P to assist in assessments and creating and implementing support plans. The approach aims to be non-patronising and non-demanding, and to provide an opportunity to explore individuals' qualities and what they want to achieve in their life – both in the short and long term. The basic premise is that everyone can have control to overcome challenges. The challenge in promoting change can actually often be from the professionals or society that stand in the way; therefore, 'we' (the professionals and society) need to change our approach and acknowledge that people do have strengths, resources and qualities that can be used and built on to result in positive change. The peer support programme goes away from the idea that people are 'done to' and more towards a collaborative approach where people identify their desired aims and outcomes and a support plan is put into place that will best achieve the aim or outcome. As one peer support worker stated:

"It's quite satisfying because I can say what happens to me, hope it's helpful, and point in the right direction."

One strength of the peer support programme is the ability for the meeting to act as a form of group/community support alongside individual (one-to-one) support. P2P has an example of completing three carers' assessments at once where the carers were able to individually fill out their assessment forms, but were able to share their experiences, as carers, in the group if they chose to do so. As a result, two of the carers shared contact details, hoping to act as a support to one another. The group environment of filling out carers' assessments not only ensured that a carer received an assessment to which s/he was entitled, but also informal group support from other individuals who were also in a caring role. There are occasions when people who use services or carers do not particularly benefit from the group setting, and so the peer support worker takes the individual out to be on their own, away from the group.

The peer support worker role not only empowers and aims to support the service user/carer, but also provides a sense of empowerment and self-confidence in the peer support worker. The support appears to be truly mutual.

2. Community engagement at each level of People2People

The community, people who use services and carers are involved at each level of P2P. The peer support programme consists of people who use services and carers from the community who were recruited by asking known people who use services and carers to become involved and then using 'word of mouth' or 'snowballing' to build the pool of peer support workers. This is an ongoing process. Additionally, the community was engaged to learn about the peer support programme. This occurred by the support workers informing people who use services and carers of this programme (suggesting that they participate in the peer support programme alongside the assessment process) and by the peer support workers relaying the details of the programme by word of mouth.

The peer support workers were key in setting up the programme and were influential in shaping the direction of the programme by identifying problems or obstacles and possible solutions.

P2P held an open day in order to encourage the community to come to the agency and to hear about the different services that are available. Because of this open day, one carer attended and subsequently attended the peer support session to complete a carers' assessment.

Community members are also represented on the board of directors and the advisory group.

There is also a collaborative effort between P2P and other voluntary organisations within the community. P2P are aiming to work closely with WRVS, Age UK, and British Red Cross.

3. Person-centred planning/promoting independence

The main aim of P2P is to conduct person-centred planning and to promote independence. In doing so, the social workers/support workers report that they are having to be more creative (alongside the service user) in thinking of how to achieve the service user's aim. In promoting independence, there is less need to rely on a carer service where someone will come in to the home for someone once or several times a day. Instead, the focus is on how the service user (or their community) can better provide the service while best encouraging the service user to maintain as much independence as possible.

In promoting person-centred planning and independence, P2P surveys the community for existing resources that could meet the needs of people who use services without implementing local authority resources, such as visiting carers or day centres, unless this is deemed more appropriate to meet the service user's needs. Accessing such community resources can often be seen as a preventative source where the service user's immediate needs are being met, but also preventative, promoting quality of life and human growth. This type of working is reactive to current needs, preventative of

further, more complicated needs, respectful of the person's quality of life, and a cost saver – 'deal with the issue now and prevent more complicated issues in the future.'

The use of assistive technology (AT) is a particular resource that can assist in promoting independence. P2P staff are being trained in AT on the 'Trusted assessor' course, which gives an overall picture of the equipment in certain situations and what other equipment is available. By being trained, some P2P staff members will be able to provide the equipment and to try it out to see if it works as opposed to referring to an occupational therapist (OT) or another agency (which could take more time and cost more money, leaving the service user without a resource and need met for longer). If the AT works, then the service user may have to purchase the equipment out of their personal budget unless it is a larger (cost-wise) item and needs to be referred to an OT where it could be a health-assisted resource and paid for by the NHS.

4. Meeting service user and carer needs in the most efficient and effective way

The 'Trusted assessor' course enables staff to provide equipment advice, and to try out the equipment with the service user before committing to a purchase. This could reduce the need to call out an OT (increasing the wait time for a need to be met) or for a service user to go to the Independent Living Partnership to look at equipment. The use of AT can provide an opportunity for people who use services to have their needs met with the aim of keeping as much independence as possible (see point 3 above). Again, this could save money in not having to have a carer called out to remind a service user to take his/her medication (a 30-minute call from a caring service), but could, more importantly, empower the service user by enabling them to remain more independent. In this sense, P2P is really looking at OT and social work together with social workers/support workers becoming more familiar and trained in AT.

With the layers of management removed, Ros (the practice lead) is able to say yes to packages up to a certain budget, which has cut out three pieces of paperwork.

P2P state that it is:

"Always looking for alternatives. Not always cheaper alternatives, but alternatives that are more appropriate to the individual's needs."

5. Staff involvement/giving the responsibility to the worker

P2P works to the motto that 'staff members actually know what they want and need in order to do an effective and efficient job.' P2P allows staff to express ideas and suggestions for changes and improvements to the practice. The staff report that they feel listened to and that if they do express an idea or opinion, they feel it will be addressed. This is the same for ideas around IT systems, assessments and paperwork and training.

How are the values of social enterprise being evidenced at People2People?

The following list was compiled through communication with the staff and directors at P2P.

1. Staff involvement and ownership. Instead of saying 'it's not my job', we all feel it is 'our' job because we own the business. We shape and mould the direction of the business.
2. Staff being listened to. If a staff member is not happy about something, then they are able to verbalise this and the team take it on board.
3. A flatter management structure. Everyone is involved and valued.
4. Staff and user involvement, representation and ownership.

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