

Planning with Paul

Paul is a smart, funny guy who greets people loudly when they enter his house and can be very friendly. He has a great sense of humour and a lovely smile, that lights up his face. He likes getting involved and has an amazing memory. Paul lives in the north-east, where he has been supported by United Response for the past seven years.

Before that, Paul spent most of his life in a local long-stay hospital where he had very little say in his life or activities. When this institution thankfully closed and people were placed into more appropriate care, Paul was one of the last to leave. The hospital staff perceived him as "difficult to place". He exhibited challenging behaviour, with three or four serious incidents each month, including aggressive behaviour to others and property destruction.

When United Response took over his care, he needed 2:1 staffing, 24 hours a day. His team could see that his challenging behaviour came from anxiety and frustration, partly because Paul is unable to tell us verbally how he would like his life to look. The team realised that in order to help Paul have a more happy and fulfilling life, they needed to create a really effective Person Centred Plan and Positive Behaviour Support Plan

Positive Behaviour Support Plan

The team's Service Manager attended the United Response Positive Behaviour Support training and used this to develop a plan with Paul's team. This started with an open discussion with the staff about their fears, identifying triggers and breaking down the attitude that "it's just Paul".

They realised that they had been mainly reacting to Paul's behaviour and worrying about reducing the risk to others or property when he exhibited challenging behaviour. So instead, they focused on proactive strategies to minimise Paul's anxieties, thus reducing the incidents of challenging behaviour.

This plan has been running, with revisions, for around four years now, and Paul's challenging behaviour has reduced to just one incident every other month on average. Paul is noticeably less anxious and more content with his life.

The team is now looking at developing the plan to include improving communication and applying the positive behaviour support process to other behaviours.

Person Centred Plan

When Paul first came to the service, he had a document from the hospital called a Person Centred Plan, but this was no more than a record of his personal history and a list of likes and dislikes. There had been no attempt to plan out a future for him, other than the separate process of settling him in the community. The manager and the team developed a proper Person Centred Plan following discussions in the local coaches group. His family members

had never had the option to get involved in Paul's future, so the manager included them and his social worker as well as the staff team in developing the plan.

Initially, the plan focused on immediate goals. But following feedback from an evaluation by United Response's Practice Development Team last summer, the team has started trying to incorporate "SMART" goals, and dreams and aspirations into the plan. This requires a rather more creative approach, as Paul is not able to verbalise his wishes, and does not tend to be able to look ahead and visualise future hopes and dreams. The team discussed options at his last Person Centred Review and his family have now agreed to think about things that Paul might have enjoyed in the past to inform a "best guess" discussion at the next review.

The team has found that by using the Positive Behaviour Support Plan and Person Centred Plan meaningfully, and not in a token manner, they have been able to achieve a substantial improvement in Paul's life