

Community Connectors

Time limited interventions

Common features of our delivery around time limited Community Connector services.

1. **Central contact point** - we have found models that have a central contact point are able to manage referrals, case-loads and messaging effectively.
2. **Initial triage call** - an initial call helps set the scene about the project and helps introduce the time limited nature of the work. It also helps undertake an initial sift of participants to help identify if they are suitable for the service.
3. **Face to face assessment** - most use paid staff to undertake the initial assessment. This allows them to assess the complexity of the case and to decide which member of the team (staff or volunteer) to allocate to. At present conducting this assessment face to face is seen as an important first step to building the relationship and in providing a person centred approach.
4. **Keeping a referral partner informed** - Community Connector projects have a huge range of potential referral routes. Giving regular feedback to referral partners, even if it is to report disengagement, helps to keep partners involved.

Particular issues with time limited interventions

1. Length of engagement depends on the complexity of the case. There can be an average length of engagement but there has to be some flexibility to account for more complex cases.
2. Time limited does not necessarily need to mean a fixed number of weeks or months and can instead be a fixed number of sessions. Using a fixed number of sessions, instead of time limited number of sessions, allows people to move through the project at their own pace and allows for breaks for ill-health etc.,
3. People with ongoing support needs which cannot be addressed through a time limited intervention need to be acknowledged and accommodated via communication with the original referrer and/or via referral to another service
4. Exit can be difficult. Strong managers are needed to support both staff and volunteers as well as clients to know when the right time to move on is. Can start with face to face but then taper support to telephone and then email.

Connecting into the wider community infrastructure - moving on

This needs

- High levels of awareness of what is on offer as well as what isn't. This means investing time in attending network events and other activities
- A range of opportunities available to reflect the diversity of people being worked with

- Information and advice
- Opportunities to make links without having to travel

Putting people first

1. Use the right language - it is important to use positive (strength based) conversations. This means focusing on what people can do and what matters to that person.
2. Recruit the right people - it is important that volunteers and staff have the right approach. This means having a positive mindset, being able to develop effective professional relationships and being perceptive about the person and their environment. They also need skills that support people to do things for themselves.
3. Set expectations - introduce the time limited element from the start and help people plan how they will use the time. Co-produce the action plan but go at the pace of the person
4. Be clear about parameters - be clear on the boundaries of the relationship and when volunteer involvement will end and change. Support volunteers and staff to manage these boundaries
5. Retain flexibility - all time limited interventions need some flexibility to allow people to move through at the pace that suits them. This means some will engage for a longer period or will have breaks in the support.