



# What Matters: the Camden approach to adult social care

## Summary Brief

### What is What Matters?

The purpose of What Matters is to embed a strengths-based approach to social work practice across Support and Safeguarding, CLDS and mental health. This will be achieved through the roll out of the 3 Conversations framework and the delivery of five complementary work-streams. These work-streams include a variety of consultation, engagement and co-design exercises with key stakeholders e.g. people with lived experience, service users, carers, families, Age U.K. etc.

### Phase I: Design & consultation

#### Why are we doing this?

*'Together we want to make Camden a better borough – a place where everyone has a chance to succeed, where nobody gets left behind, and where everybody has a voice. We want to build on strengths, working with people, as experts in their own lives, focusing on What Matters to them not what's the matter with them'*. Camden Plan 2025, Supporting People, Connecting Communities.

What Matters aligns with the commitment in the council's strategic objectives and will help to build community resilience.

#### How have we consulted & researched so far?

At the national level, presently a range of local authorities in England are either planning or already embedding a strengths based approach to social work practice. The initiatives have been championed by Lyn Romeo, the Chief Social Worker for adults in England, because the evidence suggests that this approach delivers improved outcomes for all stakeholders.

We have contacted or visited many of these authorities to learn about their experiences and to take advice about how to tailor change to suit the local context. We are also actively supporting a research programme run by Birmingham University to help them to develop the next iteration of their guidance on strengths-based practice.

Locally, we commissioned Partners4Change to help us set up a series of innovation sites to test how we could take a more consistent approach to embedding strengths-based practice.

#### What have we learnt from the consultation & research?

It is widely acknowledged nationally that the introduction of care management under the NHS and Community Care Act 1990 has had the unintended consequence of replacing direct, relationship-based social work with additional bureaucracy aimed at rationing resources. As a result, many industry leaders advocate that adult social care needs to reclaim core social work values, using a community-based approach that focuses on peoples' strengths, knowledge and capabilities.

Feedback from the innovation sites revealed that, when practitioners are given the freedom to build strong relationships, responding to identified needs does not always have to result in commissioning 'services'.

Indeed it is often the case that people prefer community-based solutions because practitioners ‘tap into’ what is already familiar i.e. the person’s network of support, local community resources etc.

### What did we design?

What Matters is designed to achieve a cultural shift away from a deficit-based care management operating model to a strengths-based approach. The purpose is to put enablers in place and set standards to equip everyone to work in a consistent way. The project has 4 mutually complementary work-streams, which will equip practitioners with the skills and tools they need to work in a strengths-based way.

1. **Practice Development & Training** - to equip practitioners with the skills, knowledge and tools to engage in strengths-based practice.
2. **Systems Recording & Reporting** - to ensure the Mosaic workflow is clearly aligned to the 3 Conversations framework, to ensure that recording is balanced and proportionate.
3. **Quality Assurance & Performance** - to develop performance reporting mechanisms and processes that enable effective operational delivery and strategic oversight of our strengths based approach
4. **Partnerships** - to promote a strengths-based approach with key partner organisations in the voluntary and community sectors and to embed strengths-based practice within commissioned service provision.

### Phase II: Implementation & impact

#### What are the next steps?

June 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff Awareness briefing sessions</li> <li>• Design the What Matters Coaching Programme</li> <li>• Finalise the What Matters Learning &amp; Development offer</li> <li>• Finalise and test the new Mosaic Forms</li> <li>• Plan peer support activities to support the roll out of 3 Conversations framework</li> </ul>
August	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Training for new Mosaic forms</li> <li>• Engagement events begin for people with lived experience</li> <li>• Partnerships engagement activities</li> </ul>
September	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Roll out 3 Conversations framework</li> <li>• Managers Supervision training course</li> <li>• What Matters Coaching programme begins</li> <li>• Series of roadshows begin to promote strengths-based approach with partners</li> </ul>

#### How can you be involved?

- Make sure to attend the Staff Awareness briefing sessions on strengths-based practice.
- Share your ideas or put forward suggestions about how we can improve peer support to embed strengths-based practice with Hayley Schofield or Sean Ahern. As this support is peer-led, you have the opportunity to shape the agenda and make it your own. What would you find helpful? What do you need support with?
- Better still, why not consider leading or facilitating a peer support session – e.g. a reflective session on a particular problem/issue, a lunch and learn group discussion on a particular topic, an awareness session to help identify group/individual strengths and how they can support practice.
- Regularly log onto Yammer’s ‘Adult Social Care’ or ‘What Matters’ forums.
- Read the Adult Social Care Transformation e-newsletter to receive regular updates.
- Keep an eye out for updates on Essentials

- Log onto the Learning Pool – L&D Hub for news on courses and training
- Read I-Reflect for the latest updates on national policy and research into strengths-based practice.
- Check out the wide range of additional practitioner resources at RiPFA (Research in Practice for Adults) at [www.ripfa.org.uk](http://www.ripfa.org.uk)