



## Bradford West Area Committee – Appendix C

### Breaking the Cycle

#### Case Study

##### **Young Person's background:**

Family environment growing up was chaotic with mum and her new parents continually moving in together, all 4 siblings have different dad and all had no contact with their respective fathers and a lack of stable adult relationship at home

School/Education environment – the young person has undiagnosed additional needs, this has made it challenging for him to engage with education as he had struggled to keep up with peers and had become more isolated as a result of this. The young person also has challenges with his mental health which are linked with his academic failure, leaving school with no qualifications - the young person has been NEET for the last 2 years

Early childhood trauma has led to the young person struggling to maintain trusting relationships with adults. The young person has alongside the trust issues, some real social anxiety, and was overly concerned of what others think of him

The young person had turned to crime, to a wider group of friends who did not have his good interests at heart and this saw him involved in youth criminality and criminal convictions. He became involved in county lines and was referred into Breaking the Cycle project

##### **Details of the intervention and distance travelled**

- Work with the young person had also considered the need to focus on raising his self-esteem, this was very low at the start of the intervention. Breaking the cycle has supported this young person through positive activities to get him to the stage where he is able to engage with others, outside of his usual peer group.
- After the self-esteem work Breaking the Cycle staff travelled trained the young person to be confident about using public transport, which was a significant barrier to him seeking employment or training opportunities beyond the area he could walk to
- Due to being NEET the young person needed intensive support to help him consider how he can progress in life, and to identify viable alternative to criminality. Breaking The Cycle has delivered Criminal Exploitation interventions to this young person, in a way that he has been able to understand and see his place within this, with an overall aim to decrease him being drawn to situations where he is vulnerable to CCE.
- Breaking the Cycle have engaged this young person in positive activities to get the young person to a stage where he has applied for college access to employment course.

- The young person regularly smokes cannabis; he is also very open about this. Prior to his arrest he has been missing with his friend X for around ten days and they have ended up in Blackpool and later Scarborough where the young person was arrested for possession of drugs (with intent to supply).
- The young person's associates are young people known to Social Care, Youth Justice Service and Breaking the Cycle. Due to the Breaking the Cycles relationship with the other young people, we have been able to remove the drivers and support the young person to start to make more positive life choices. The work that the youth workers together have undertaken with the wider friendship group has also kept his friendships strong, whilst facilitating a way out of criminality for all of the group of friends.
- The young person maintained a code of silence for a long time and would not say who he was drug running for when he was arrested, this indicates he was still vulnerable to becoming a victim of CCE again. Over time the Breaking the Cycle youth worker 'broke' the young person's 'code of silence' to the point where the young person had started to disclose small details around their exploitation and the people who were the exploiters.
- The worker's relationships with the young people was paramount in this case as the young people needed to trust that if they disclosed details of their exploitation and further criminal activities, that they would still be supported and protected. The young person gave small pieces of information and then waited to see what happened with that information to help him decide if he could trust the worker before he furnished us with more information, which was key to disrupting the exploiters and identifying others impacted by the same people
- The young person has not engaged well historically with children's social care, through the Breaking the Cycle relationship the youth worker has managed to convince the young person to engage with Social Care services to a stage where with support from the Breaking the Cycle Youth worker he had been able to join the Child In Need meeting.

### **Challenges faced during the intervention**

- The young person had a lack of trust in adults, Mum often had relationships with males that lasted for a short periods of time, the young person was used to having lots of people in and out of his life and he thought the Breaking the Cycle worker would be another male to come in and out of this life. The challenge was for him to be able to trust the worker.
- The challenge was the need to build the relationship and other services known to the young man and his family did not have capacity to spend enough quality time with him to be able to build the relationship, and there was not a relationship with his allocated social worker He did not like always the things he was been told about his behaviours and what needed to change. He did not see himself as being vulnerable or unsafe in the same way that those around him did.
- Home life was a challenge for the young person, home wasn't a chaotic place but this home felt more like a house to the young person as the family unit is broken as mum was staying there with her new partner none of the children liked or had a relationship with, and no efforts were made to help him to get to know the people mum brought back to the house.

**Current situation:**

- The young person has displayed a change in his behaviour and towards his life progression, initially when we started the work he only saw himself only as someone who was into drugs, and his future he thought would be dealing and working in criminal environments. The young person has had a complete change of heart in regards to his associations with cannabis, he is not quite there yet, but he is smoking less cannabis now that he doesn't rely on criminality to fund his habit.
- Through his engagement we discussed exploitation of vulnerabilities and being trafficked. The Breaking the Cycle youth worker has explained and worked with the young person to help him understand how he was vulnerable and how others were using this to exploit him.
- We have discussed what a national referral mechanism was, and the young person is now aware of this and is aware of how he is being treated, and that he was trafficked.
- The young person is now in a position where by he recognises the elements of his life that have made him vulnerable and he has been given skills and coping mechanisms to reduce these vulnerabilities himself.

The young person can now see and has accepted that he was vulnerable and that he still needs some support- he is happy for Breaking the Cycles to continue providing him with this support.

Our discussions have moved to future plans and employment, the young person wrote his first CV in a recent youth work session. The youth worker has supported the young person to apply for his first job as an apprentice chef and we eagerly await the results of his application, almost as if it were our own application.

## VRU Case Study

Project involved in: Breaking the Cycle

District: Bradford

### Young Person's background:

Having been involved in County Line activity this young man was referred into Breaking the Cycle for 1-1 support to prevent his further exploitation. He had been trafficked to sell drugs from a trap house in Cumbria and had been found there during a police operation in that area. He was flagged as being at significant risk of harm from criminal exploitation.

The young man was 16 ½ years old and has not been to school for the last 20 months, having had a reduced timetable of education for longer than he can remember he did not see the point of attending for an odd hour a day. He is a bright lad and found when in school he was put in an area with other young people who he did not like, and who he described as messing about all the time and causing chaos so he never learnt anything and he quickly got to the point where he did not see the point in going.

His home life was chaotic with 3 siblings all of whom had different fathers and who had left the family home, so mother was home alone with her son and his siblings. Mother had her own vulnerabilities and there was a lack of stability in the home environment and a lack of wider family support. This young man has really struggled to maintain relationships with adults and more recently has become untrusting of professionals, becoming at times very angry and overly anxious about situations.

He reported feeling that his exploiters were kind to him, he felt they looked after him and gave him things that he didn't get at home (trainers, money), and he had felt he was making a choice to get involved, he felt he was in control of what was going on.

### Situation at the beginning of the intervention/project

- The young man had a drug misuse habit himself
- He was in debt to the exploiters after money and drugs were seized by police during their operations in Cumbria
- He told us his debt was around £6,000
- He was becoming anxious about the drugs debt and what this would mean for him as he knew he would not be able to pay this debt back
- He was concerned that his exploiters knew a lot about him, where he lived etc, and he was worried that they may turn up to the house, or threaten his family as he had previously experienced this when he had not paid back all the money as he had "ticked" people who he thought were his friends on a promise to pay and they did not make the payment, which got him into having to "graft" out of the district.
- Work with the young person a need to focus on raising his self-esteem, as this was recognised as being low at the start of the intervention.
- He did not have a good relationship with his peers, and this had become more distant the more he had been around the crime group.
- He was not at all street wise, although he thought he was quite street wise
- He believed people would "look after him" and this turned out to not be the case
- He was on a Child in Need Plan but felt he was not a child and did not engage positively with this

### Challenges faced:

- Lack of trust
- Lack of positive role models
- Lack of engagement with support services
- Fear of unknown consequences linked to his drugs debt
- Home life being chaotic
- Education / employment being non-existent

### Current Situation

Whilst there is still some distance to go his current situation is one that is starting to stabilise. His relationship with mum had broken down completely and there has been much conflict in the home. Mum blames the young man for bringing "trouble to the door" and putting his siblings at risk. He has worked with his allocated worker to find alternative accommodation having signed his own section 20 to come into care of the local authority. The placement has meant that he has moved to a different part of the district and he reports feeling safer there. He has started seeing the skills house worker who works in the Breaking the Cycle team and is starting to look forward for viable alternatives to his previous criminal ways of raising money. He is now getting benefits he is entitled to and has worked with us to secure a place in college. He has accepted his drug misuse is a driving factor for him being exploited and whilst he is not yet ready to work with specialist drug support services he positively engages with the work Breaking the Cycle provides around harm reduction and substance misuse, which means he feels more in control of his reduction in substance misuse, which in turn is keeping him safer as he is not needing to commit crime to fund the habit he has. His understanding of the cycle of exploitation has increased and whilst he is still saying if he had to he would return to county line activity we feel we have enough positive things and support around him to keep the likelihood of this as a low risk. He is a young man who has received intensive support from the Youth Work team and the team have seen him almost every day for a key period of time, his health and wellbeing is increasing from being around us and learning to cook, and regularly taking the therapy dog out for a walk is paying huge benefits to him getting into more positive routines.

### Milestones achieved:

- More positive relationship with family since moving away from family home
- Increased trust in services who are providing support
- Reduced substance misuse
- Increased health and well-being
- Increased independence and more equipped with life skills
- Increased awareness of exploitation and more considered responses to offers and quick wins
- Increased engagement in learning / training opportunities