

Open Learn: Learning Space audio transcript
K303_1: Managing to meet service users' needs
A Meeting of Minds: Video clip 1

Lynette Clark

Jane Reast is director of Redcar and Cleveland Mind, a mental health organisation run by, and for, local people.

Jane Reast

Hi Sam. How's the DIY?

Sam

Not so bad ... getting there slowly. I've just got a bit of post for you. There's something from Mind about the campaign there. There you go.

Lynette Clark

Guiding the project in a collaborative way is an art born of experience.

Jane Reast

Is that all? Ok, give me five minutes, after I've done this.

I came to Redcar and Cleveland Mind ten years ago as a development worker, the organisation's first paid worker. I had all sorts of expectations that everybody would be really clear about what it was they wanted, everything would be set up and smooth and running and what they actually wanted was someone to support and develop some services. I was in for a surprise.

Jane Reast

Have you got anything Sam, for the diary?

Sam

Yes, the builders haven't been in touch about starting today. We haven't heard from them. Do you want me to give them a chase?

Jane Reast

We can be very, very flexible but we need to know the times and particularly the Redcar day service, because we'll have to put the backyard out of bounds, health and safety.

Sam

Right, I'll give them a call.

Lynette Clark

Dealing with problems of day-to-day practice must be combined with a broader vision for the organisation.

Jane Reast

Some people around actually thought they were getting something like a centre manager. Someone who'd actually kind of come in, open up, you know sit there on a morning, look interesting behind a desk, make sure the lights and the bins and the place was clean, and lock and shut the door.

And it seemed really important to me, for my own sanity in some ways, to actually get out and about and make connections.

Jane Reast

Morning everyone.

Everyone

Morning.

Jane Reast

Morning Maureen, morning David, morning Sue, morning Gwen, morning Irene, morning Ted, morning Donna, morning Kendra; morning Ron. How we doing?

Ron

How are you.

Jane Reast

I'm all right, you?

Ron

Not so bad.

Lynette Clark

Making connections has meant working creatively with the local community in a range of distinctive partnerships.

At the heart of the project are the day services, which are constantly evolving in response to the expressed needs of users.

Jane Reast

Our day services are open access and drop-in. The drop-in model is a spring board for people to come together; to support each other, to break down isolation with support.

But nobody has to come. Everybody is free to come and go as they please.

Therefore people can vote with their feet.

Woman

Over the years I've grown in confidence, do different things, I've got a lot of circle of friends here.

Man

The atmosphere's great. Projects are always on the go. Never time to sit down, mind.

Woman

It's just like one big happy family. It's brilliant. You feel safe, you feel comfortable, and you can be yourself, that's one thing you can be, yourself.

Jane Reast

Hi Terry.

Terry

Hi Jane.

Jane Reast

All right?

Lynette Clark

Co-ordinating the day services is actually the responsibility of day centre staff. Jane works closely with these colleagues and with users to shape the services.

Jane Reast

So are you okay for cover this weekend?

Terry

We've everything sorted out for the weekend; all the covers sorted out and they got off on the bus okay today.

Lynette Clark

How is it possible to keep in tune with grass roots feeling about new projects?

Jane Reast

For me, the best place to actually hear what's on people's minds is actually just to be around the drop-in.

And it's really, really vital for me not to have my colleagues as the only filter, not because I don't have trust and respect for my colleagues, but I really need to hear that for myself.

As an organisation, we've already got what's called a domain name and a piece of cyberspace that belongs to us, so that the work that you've actually been doing in the project is really, really relevant to actually go on to there.

Nick Murray

It'd be nice for people, if we're to go to a wider audience I think.

Jane Reast

Caroline, did you know that the piece around walking and getting a new hobby was actually on the website?

Caroline

No, I didn't.

Jane Reast

Didn't *you*?

Caroline

No.

Jane Reast

Well do you want to look at yourself in Cyberspace?

Caroline

Yeah.

Woman

Do you want to pop round here and have a look?

Jane Reast

Now potentially everyone knows Caroline Granger walks.

It's been important to me to ensure there's genuine service user involvement within ... integral to, not kind of bolted on ... integral to ... an integral part of that partnership, that whole.

Jane Reast

And so, are you going to bring all those notes and thoughts to that meeting with Simon?

Man

You know, so, I mean we've got a good size for people to look at on our website.

Jane Reast

And I can absolutely say that I was green and raw, and people taught me what it meant to actually take people with you, and work with people, and be very, very clear about ... with people, and negotiate what it was that we must do, what it was that we might do.

Woman

What it was, was that the number of organisations has grown so we needed to extend the range.

Jane Reast

Right.

Lynette Clark

Under Jane's stewardship, Redcar and Cleveland Mind has actively fostered links with the wider community. It provides information on mental health services throughout the Teeside area.