



Still Listening, Still Learning: Personal Outcomes in 2025 and Beyond

Your name, role and organisation:

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Story title:

Making time together to make a difference in home care

Overview:



Our home care company, Gofal Seibiant, has a contract to deliver home care for the Local Authority and Health Board in a geographical patch in Gwynedd (North Wales). The commissioned model requires us to work as part of a wider team of health and care colleagues and to draw on community connections and assets. Our purpose is to ensure people can live the best life possible. Through strong working

relationships, understanding what really matters to people and delivering care that is flexible and responsive, we continually strive to meet this purpose.

With the support of funding awarded by Welsh Government through a Small Business Research and Innovation domiciliary care challenge, we took active steps to collaborate with social work and occupational therapies colleagues. Together, we set about to see how the home care model could be embedded in our patch, and what improved outcomes we could realise.

A team consisting of management and staff from Gofal Seibiant and the nominated social workers and occupational therapists for the patch were involved. As the work progressed, support was offered by a Council officer working in community development, ensuring links with community groups and third sector organisations. The team was supported in a critical friend / coaching and mentoring capacity, by an assistant head of service from the Council's Adults, Health and Wellbeing Department. This person is now Director of Cwmni Melin, and continues to support Gofal Seibiant in their new role.

What have you had to do differently and what made this possible?

- We, the home care provider, social workers and therapists have all had to make the time to spend time together regularly (about once a week) to discuss what really matters to people and how they can be supported – made possible by leaders who believed in the value of bringing people together to build relationships and learn on an ongoing basis
- By considering all the people needing home care in the area (those already receiving support and those on waiting lists), rather than operating on a 'one in one out' basis, we have found ways of making better use of capacity and radically reduced the overall waiting list – made possible by enhancing data and sharing it freely and regularly amongst the team
- We have been disciplined about truly understanding what matters to people, and taking time to get to the bottom of this (rather than starting care on the basis of a single 'assessment'). This has led to creative solutions, and more flexible care, and at times reduced care – leaders made this possible by encouraging strength-based practice, and allowing time for front line staff to build relationships with people (even though there was a growing waiting lists for a social work assessment)
- Every time we have met as a group, we've looked at information about people from our patch who are in hospital and considered who might need care after they come home. This has helped us plan our staffing rotas and recruitment efforts – made possible due to the fact that the Council and Health Board have developed a joint real-time report showing information about people who are in hospital, including whether or not they are already known to the social services team
- Gofal Seibiant employs a therapies assistant. Before our weekly conversations, the social workers and occupational therapists were sceptical about the role, but as an understanding and trust was built, and a process put in place to ensure everyone understood who was being supported to meet which outcomes, this changed – regular honest conversations including the therapies assistant made this possible
- During conversations, we learnt about the aspects of the commissioned home care model that staff needed support to understand and put into practice. A number of staff workshops were held, where they were supported to build relationships as a team, attend training and contribute to our company's development (including preparing a Team Charter) – this was made possible by having an external mentor / coach working alongside us.

Has this helped to keep a focus on what matters to people in face of current challenges?

Yes, by coming together as a team, we have been able to have a much better understanding of the challenges we're facing and have built trust so that we're more open and confident in addressing them together.

Many of us were sceptical at the start, because we felt that weekly meetings were time consuming in a period when we were all extremely busy with heavy work loads. However, as the weeks went by, we saw the value in the conversations. We found that by doing the right thing and focusing consistently on what matters to people, we were actually managing to meet the local demand much more effectively. By now, we have more staff on our books and a much better relationship with our wider team of colleagues. Three

months after the official 'project' ended, we still sustain a good position where we barely have anyone in the patch waiting for home care.

What have you noticed in terms of outcomes or impact?

- we have become much better at knowing what personal outcomes we're helping people to meet, and have evidence that more people are making progress towards their outcomes
- we have asked everyone we support what they would like to do or achieve if at all possible, and staff now know they have the autonomy to support people to do some of these things. There are many examples of people going out into their community to re-engage with other people or to enjoy the outdoors
- By being proactive, the number of safeguarding referrals has significantly reduced, with any niggles being discussed by the wider team, and resolved early
- Staff recruitment and retention is improved
- Staff sickness absence has decreased
- Care staff feel valued due to the fact they are being trusted to make decisions with people and help them live their best possible life
- It is now common practice for home care staff, therapies assistant from Gofal Seibiant and occupational therapist to visit someone together, sharing information and assisting someone to put the best options for them into action quicker and with less meetings.

How did this make you feel?

I came into this sector because I wanted to make a real difference to people's lives, but found that it wasn't easy to achieve this because of the disconnect between me and the team, and the social workers. Also, the old home care model which was based on a list of tasks and specific times of day was restrictive and frustrating.

Building relationships with people and helping citizens have a better life has reinvigorated my passion for the care sector and has made my role much more enjoyable.

What have you learned through this?

The main thing I've learnt is that sometimes you just need to go back to basics! Talk to people – those needing our care and support, their families, social workers, therapists, staff on the ground and community partners. Everyone has something to contribute, and by working together we're able to find the right solutions for people in a creative way, and very often we can achieve better things in a simpler way.

Anything else you want to tell us?

Nothing we've done is rocket science. If we can do it, any social care team can do it. Building and maintaining relationships is crucial. It takes time, but it's time well spent.