



## Fitting into life

'It's like everything's coming together like a jigsaw', says a service user at The Quay Project, Broadreach House's innovative day support centre in Plymouth. **DDN** met staff and users at the project.

*'It's counterproductive to spend a lot of money on someone's rehab programme and then plonk them back where they started from, in the same community, with the same housing, training, and employment issues they had before,' says Rick Weeks, manager of Broadreach House, which has three residential Plymouth treatment centres (Broadreach, Longreach and Closereach).*

*'Over the years we've started seeing people with huge social issues as well as drug and alcohol problems,' says chief executive Chrissy Richman. 'Through talking to service users, we realised we needed a much broader kind of care than in our traditional aftercare groups.'*

*With funding and advice from Futurebuilders, the business plan for Ocean Quay evolved. Support from the European Social Fund accelerated development: they had to have the building ready in six months' time. With 'a lot of screaming at the builders', the former warehouse was transformed into a state-of-the-art centre that includes a gym, acupuncture studio, internet café, recording studio and crèche.*

*A modest enterprise scheme has opened new doors. With money from a bank trust, they have created a 'miniature Futurebuilders scheme', helping entrepreneurial clients with a business plan and small loan to begin trading. 'We believe it's our job to provide the motivation, rather than waiting for people to find it,' says Chrissy Richman.*

**'When I came here my life was at an end. I'd hit rock bottom,' says Jackie. 'I had a drug habit and an alcohol habit, and I was being battered – literally, my face was bruised. I lost my daughter when she was three and a half – she's now 16.'**

*'When I came to Broadreach I had a safe place to stay. I was in a group of other women who were in similar circumstances. I still see two of them, and both have gone on to get careers. I still haven't, and that's why I now attend this project. I've been able to fit in quite well.'*

*'I also suffer from depression. When I started the 12-week course, I came to stay for four weeks then my tablets were changed over and I crashed down again with depression. The project allowed me to come back and start from where I'd left off. That was really great for me because if I don't have some kind of goal to pull me back out, I could stay in depressive mode for six months or a year.'*

*'Because of the Quay Project I've been able to come back and get on with it. I've completed my course, done voluntary work in the nursery and am starting a course for carers that will give me a certificate. This has been just the safety net I've needed.'*

**'We were involved in Ocean Quay from the beginning, as we are based in public health and have a 'whole systems' and evidence-based approach,' says Plymouth DAAT manager, Gary Wallace.**

Funding half the running costs, the DAAT works with Broadreach House 'to try and mainstream as much of the funding as we can' – not easy in the face of this year's budget cuts. But the DAAT is committed to 'looking at things in the round, and trying to have a realistic and achievable approach'.

'We try not to see services in isolation, because as a treatment community we see substance problems as complex, requiring complex solutions,' he explains. To reach these solutions, the DAAT meets regularly with the chief executives of local services at the Dave Group ('It doesn't stand for anything – we were just fed up with acronyms') to share targets and priorities.

'The way to get the best for the service user is to have an inclusive approach and listen to other people's views, says Gary Wallace. 'A lot of DAATs lock themselves in a cycle of re-tendering and that's not very good for the service user, so we try to keep as much stability as possible. Ocean Quay is like the lynchpin of the "whole system" approach.'

**'For a long time I realised that we provided an incredible service in terms of residential treatment, but at the end of that people were clearly not ready to move into the wider community,' says team manager Derek Buchanan.**

'I felt we were not really doing what we ought to be doing to help people make that final transition – that integrated part of the process.

From working as a rehab counsellor, he realised that by the end of their treatment, clients would regard the place as their home and could feel excluded in aftercare.

'They were outsiders, they had lost their place. And that was a very negative experience for them.

'The greatest advantage of this place is helping people with their personal development, making them ready to leave here and go on to more community-based settings, such as a college of further education and Working Links.'

Vocational training is high on the agenda. The 'introduction to care' course is a six-month programme, three days a week, which includes a professional placement in an outside organisation and an NVQ at the end.

'It's not sending people to work in charity shops – that's what we don't want to do,' he emphasises. 'It's not occupational therapy, we're not just keeping them busy – they're learning transferable skills.'

**'I came from prison to the treatment centre at Longreach, which was very good. But I came out, relapsed, went into Broadreach, came out and relapsed again,' says Traci.**

'When this project opened, I'd just moved into supported housing. It gave me the break I needed. I committed myself to the 12 weeks and it was hard – I can't say it wasn't. That was last June, and I've stuck with it.

'I've got most out of the voluntary places I've done – in the community, here on reception, and doing induction, mentoring all the new people that come in.

'It's been really good for me because I've never had a job or qualifications. I'm in college now, doing my English and maths GCSEs, and I'm starting an access course in psychology in September. It's like everything's coming together like a jigsaw.

'I struggled and relapsed when I came out of treatment, but maybe I wasn't ready to change anything. But this place is for people who want to make a go of it and not mess about – it's a fantastic opportunity.

'They believe in you here and will give you the utmost backing. I've done voluntary work for nine months, and now I'll get a reference. Going into the workplace as a receptionist fills my self-confidence up.'

**'I was very scared that if I stopped taking heroin I would die,' says Paolo. 'Coming to Broadreach was the first time I've done treatment in my life, and I feel so fortunate that I actually engaged with it.'**

'But when I came out, that's when reality really hit me in the face, and although I was still having support from Broadreach, I felt uncomfortable with myself. I found it difficult to live clean.

'The organisation helped me out of that by giving me a structure. I went to groups and also started going to NA [Narcotics Anonymous] meetings, and decided to do the 12 steps.

'When they set up this place, my brother was out of treatment as well, and they asked both of us if we were willing to facilitate the furniture-making workshop. So he does the woodwork and I do the upholstery side.

'The worst thing that can happen to someone like us is to feel we're on our own. I'm my own worst enemy and if I stay at home with my own thoughts, I'll go backwards big time.

'It's been so beneficial for me is to talk with other people here and see their perspectives around things that are worrying me – worries lose their power.' **DDN**