



brighter futures

creative support, housing and employment

CREATIVE – we have new and exciting solutions

In a million years if there is such a person as an archaeologist, they will perhaps say that the defining feature of human beings was that we had creativity. Unlike animals, we are able to create things of beauty and devise new solutions to problems or situations that stretch our thinking and feeling to new areas. To be creative is to make something that is **new**, **functional** and in some way **elegant**. Creative acts can make works that are designed merely to add beauty (this is the traditional meaning of the word creative) or they can create things that are mostly functional. Or they can be in between the two.

Similarly we may create words, music or visual art, but we may also create solutions, policies or actions.

Any of us can carry out our everyday tasks in a conventional way or we can be creative and do something that is new.

Brighter Futures seeks to be creative because:

- We seek to help people who have fallen through the net of conventional services and solutions.
- We want to create new situations from the old ones.
- Creativity gives a freshness to all our contacts with customers and thus expresses our passion.
- Creativity expresses our commitment to think about individuals and society and thus demonstrates our commitment to them.
- Creativity ensures that we keep all our policies under constant review and ensure that we find new ways of making them cost effective and outcome effective.
- Creative activities give customers a new language with which to express themselves and work out their problems. Sometimes they give customers an opportunity to ventilate or sort out their problems via a sort of proxy.

Challenges

Being creative is not without challenges:

- It is hard to measure or guarantee quality if we all do things differently.

- It would be hard for a customer to know what to expect (or what is expected of them) if we do not have some fixed structures and methods.
- We would waste a lot of resources if we were constantly re-inventing the wheel.

How Do We Encourage Creativity?

- We focus on people and outcomes. An outcome is not what we will do but the difference we are trying to make. This means holding uppermost in our minds the outcomes we want to achieve with our customers and thinking creatively about how best we can do that. We cannot empower customers to think and make better choices if they are not clear what they are trying to achieve.
- Of course systems, structures and processes are important in that they help us achieve the outcomes. Working creatively means we continually check that our processes, systems and structures do what we need them to do in a way that is right for the customer and in line with our values.
- For example, health and safety is really important, it allows us and our customers to stay safe. Thinking creatively about how we can prevent risks arising and when they do how we can best manage them, enables us to do things we otherwise may not be able to do. If we do not have a creative approach to health and safety then it will very quickly become something that stops us achieving our outcomes.
- If we find our systems prevent us doing the things we need to do, we should examine them and use our creativity to change them for the better. This change will only work if the need for it and the proposed changes are agreed and we are learning from each other. Things are not better if a few people make a change, do not tell others about it and everyone ends up doing things differently.
- We encourage creativity when we invite people to be part of a change process and our communication systems makes sure that the reasons for the change and how it will help us be more cost effective or deliver better outcomes is told to all so the learning and change is shared.