

NOVEMBER 2012

SMARTMOVES

*Supporting Families
For Stronger Communities*



SMARTMOVES

Smartmoves is a partnership of Brighter Futures, Stoke and District Gingerbread and North Staffordshire YMCA which is funded by Stoke on Trent City Council to support families and individuals who are at risk of losing their homes.

We recognise that people often have complex needs and have suffered difficult 'trigger' circumstances which include mental illness, sexual or physical abuse, trauma or institutionalisation. Their best attempts to deal with these situations on their own may have drawn them into addictions or other dangerous situations. The impact of this on families and children is instability and uncertainty in which children struggle to thrive and learn and parents struggle to maintain effective relationships with their children and agencies who could help them. We provide support which helps people to think about the most effective way out of their situation and to befriend them on that journey. We help people to draw up a personal plan based on the 'Outcome Star' and Every Child Matters outcomes which identifies the problems they have and what they can do to resolve them.

SMARTMOVES PROVIDES SPECIALIST SUPPORT TO FAMILIES IN CRISIS

Every family has their own smartmoves key worker who encourages them to think about the problems they have and how they can best resolve them. We have helped families to deal with mental and physical health problems, improve their living skills, helped parents to look at better ways of parenting their children, manage money and reduce debt, start the training and education that will lead to them to get a job and getting their children to school. We help people to have responsibility for their behaviour and to stop offending or anti-social behaviour. We help families overcome their troubles and find ways of learning to love one another, be active in their community and become productive citizens.

In the last 18 months smartmoves has worked with more than 400 families who between them had over 856 children. Two hundred and twenty seven children were assessed by social services to be at risk of harm. Smartmoves work has resulted in this risk of harm being reduced in 187 cases.

KATARINA'S STORY

Katarina was 'in a really bad place', she was using drugs, and in debt. Katrina and her ex-husband were in dispute over her care of their three children who were subject to a Child Protection Order. Katrina's social worker referred her to smartmoves. Soon after meeting her smartmoves support worker Katarina felt able to admit that she was taking drugs, something she had not previously disclosed.

'I felt comfortable and trusted her, I could tell her anything.'

Katarina's smartmoves worker helped her to think about what she wanted to achieve and how she could develop a personal support plan to achieve them. Katrina's main goal was a happier life for her and her children. Katrina recognized that her first step was to get treatment for her drug problems. Katrina summed up this approach.

*'It's about emotions, confidence, self-esteem – everything.
It deals with everything, but gives you choices.'*

Budgeting and money management was a big issue for Katrina. The smartmoves worker talked to Katrina about what she felt happy families did. Katrina talked about holidays and doing things together. Katrina was helped to budget her money and to save up small amounts to take the children out on trips and they went on holiday.

*'If I'd known about them years ago I'd have asked for help then.
They [smartmoves] open a lot of doors to get the support that you need.'*

Smartmoves worked with the school to get counselling for the children. Katrina describes the children as happier, less anxious about her, and that they have grown in confidence and 'come out of their shells'. Social Services recognised the progress, have removed the Child Protection Order and replaced it with a Children In Need Order, which involves less intensive supervision.

'I feel absolutely great. I've come a long way and made a great deal of progress.'

Katrina is reducing the support she has from other services. She wants to work and to pursue a career. She is interested in becoming a forensic technician, she has secured a place at Stoke-on-Trent College and will start part-time study later this year.

Smartmoves role was to help Katrina think about what she wanted and help her make choices and decisions that would help her achieve her goals. She made those decisions on the basis of thinking, not as an emotional response in a crisis. It is acting on thinking and deciding, in order to achieve goals that empowers Katrina and is and how she will maintain her independence in the future.

*'If it wasn't for smartmoves I wouldn't have got here.
I would probably have ended up dead and my children would have ended up in care.'*

FEEDBACK FROM OUR STAKEHOLDERS

'It's an easy accessible service and they provide feedback on referral'

'I have always had a very positive experience with smartmoves. The referral process is simple and clients are engaged and offered support quickly. Workers are always willing to work on a joint basis and often work with us to ensure clients attend appointments by collecting them and bringing them to venues, coming into session if clients want them to. They ask for regular feedback about clients and update us regularly also from their side of things. The feedback I have had from clients about the service is that once engaged they find them very valuable.'

'The support workers I have been involved with are really concerned about their customers. They are always there when needed and can be relied upon to provide the exact help that is required. They are very patient and always willing to speak or listen to the customer.'

'This is a vital service that helps keep tenants in their properties.'

'Work with a multi-agency approach. Very supportive of clients.'

'I have had a really positive experience with smartmoves. I have emailed and telephoned through referrals and had a really quick response to acknowledge receipt of referrals and to advise that the client will now go to the allocations meeting on a specific date.'

'I had made them aware of bail conditions and they had immediately acted on this I think they are a great service and very accommodating when arranging to bring clients into appointments and will work around us whenever possible.'

'I have used smartmoves often and have always found the service to be a professional, helpful to service users and workers share information on a need to know basis.'

WHAT HELP OUR CUSTOMERS NEEDED AND HOW MANY OF THEM ACHIEVED EXCELLENT OUTCOMES

Maximise income	91%
Reduce debt	72%
Get into paid work	48%
Participated in paid work	57%
Participated in education or training	59%
Achieved a qualification	67%
Engaged in leisure or cultural activity	74%
Undertook a training course	74%
Better contact with external services	87%
Better contact with family or friends	86%
Engaged with primary health care	72%
Engaged with mental health services	68%
Engaged with drug and alcohol services	63%
Maintained their accommodation	84%
Complied with statutory orders & processes	86%
Reduced self harm	74%
Reduced harm to self from others	65%

HOW THE CITY COUNCIL RATES SMARTMOVES

Smartmoves was assessed by Stoke on Trent City Council in 2012 as working to the highest standards, that its services are *excellent* and an example of best practice at a *national level*.

The inspectors looked at staff carrying out needs and risk assessments and negotiating support and risk management plans and said

- Staff have attended a variety of training courses to enable customers' needs to be supported, such as; bereavement training; dementia awareness; drug and alcohol training; mental health awareness and self-harm awareness.
- Staff were able to give examples of regular information sharing with individuals in external agencies, such as CPNs, Team Around the Child (TAC) leads in Common Assessment Framework (CAF).
- Staff were familiar with the concept of appropriate risk taking and saw their role as an enabling and informing one.

The inspectors looked at how committed the service was to multi-agency working and safeguarding vulnerable adults and children

- There are designated safeguarding leads. These have been trained and are appropriately supervised.
- Risk information is also shared between agencies to ensure appropriate measures are in place
- Staff confirmed that they had engaged with MAPPA and MARAC processes
- The internal case-working audit system contains a check related to joint working with safeguarding

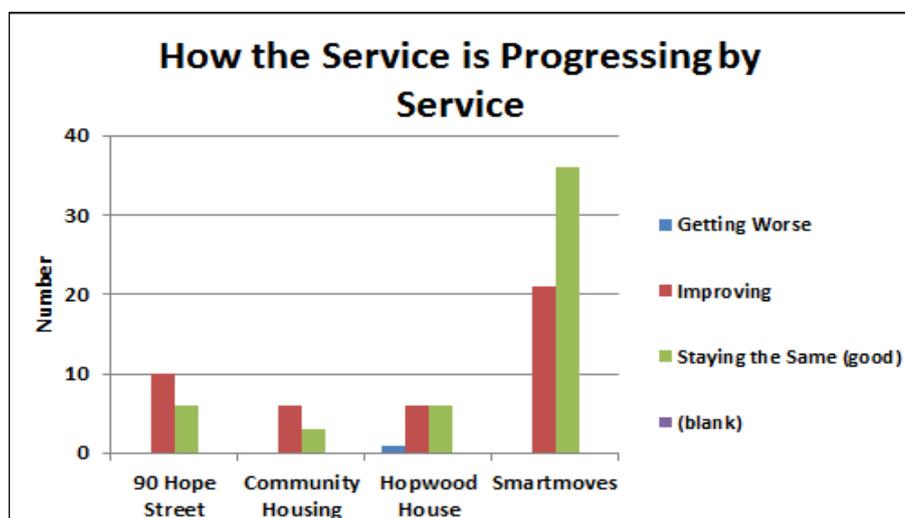
The inspectors said that clients are consulted on all significant proposals which affect their service and their views taken into account.

- There are a range of opportunities for customers to voice opinions and raise questions and provide ideas.
- Customers receive appropriate support with communication needs when being consulted.
- Volunteer and Customer Involvement surgeries are held to encourage customers to become involved in services and give their feedback.

Inspectors said clients are encouraged to consider ways in which they can participate in the wider community

- Customers confirmed during consultation that information was provided to them to let them know the opportunities on offer outside of the service and said that they only had to tell keyworkers what they were interested in and they would research things to get involved in.
- All services promote links with friends and family where appropriate. For example, a customer was being assisted to contact his family in Germany who he'd lost touch with.
- Customers are encouraged to play an active part in the community through the support planning process and the Outcome Star assessments addresses the relevant parts.
- Customers are encouraged to access volunteering opportunities
- They use the Work Star for those customers interested in getting into employment. This focuses on areas such as aspiration and motivation; social skills for work and basic skills.

HOW CUSTOMERS RATE SMARTMOVES



HOW STAKEHOLDERS RATE SMARTMOVES

