

Map the community

Reporters

Tracy Jones and Stacey Clarke at [The Danshell Group](#) on 4 March 2015.

What did you doⁱ?

We recognised that our trips and outings tended to be little more than occupation and offered few opportunities for interaction with local citizens. As a first step, we have made a plan to find out much more about the opportunities available within driving distance of our unit.

What is excellent about it?

Staff working in the unit live in different towns and have worked in other places, so have some knowledge of the facilities available in these communities. However, we want to take a systematic approach to building up our knowledge of what is available and have made a clear plan to do this.

Our goal is to establish relationships with key individuals at the most useful community facilities so that our patients can make a valued contribution and we can work together to manage any incidents that may arise. We aim to raise awareness and understanding of individuals with autism, and generate new opportunities. Initial visits would start the relationship with the community organisation and set the foundation for subsequent environmental risk assessments.

Previous support plans included trips and outings but they may not have been very meaningful to the individual or make much of a contribution to enhancing skills in independent living. Mapping community opportunities will increase the chances that we will be able to find activities that match people's interests and rehabilitation plans.

Part of the mapping process will encourage people to focus on universal services that are used by the general population, rather than always defaulting to specialist provision.

Even better next time?

We are creating a display board to present findings from the mapping process to service users. Community mapping tends to be an important activity that is rarely seen as urgent, and so can get crowded out by more immediate priorities, so making a plan will help us give this task the time it requires. Forming a plan helps us to persist despite setbacks.

The first round of community mapping is being shared by a small working group of staff, and this means that the increasing awareness is held by several people rather than just one worker. In the future, we may be able to engage all staff in this process, so that everyone gains an awareness of what is involved.

Staff training in community mapping and referring to the literature will help staff structure the process, avoid errors and make the most of the potential relationships that can form.

ⁱ [NDTi](#) was commissioned to deliver a staff development programme promoting a more personalised and inclusive approach for those living and working in locked rehabilitation services in the English East Midlands. While the current inspection routine has a focus on risk prevention, our job is to focus on sharing positive practice and innovation. Peter Bates led the programme and wrote up these stories.

The Excellence Programme is for independent and voluntary sector providers of locked residential rehabilitation services for people with mental health issues or learning disabilities living in the East Midlands. It has delivered:

- *A series of seminars for key staff and people using services to promote a more personalised and inclusive approach*
- *A shared sense of what excellent services look like, captured in an [Excellence Framework](#) document.*
- *Learning exchange visits between members which lead to individual action plans for each service*
- *Excellence stories that capture and share ideas for service improvement.*

These case studies have arisen from members of the Excellence programme and NDTi has not independently verified what we have been told. Some are radical and ambitious approaches that transform the whole service, while others consist of small steps that may not seem especially exciting to other readers, but make a difference to one person. Some readers might even question whether progress is being made at all! The overall purpose is to stimulate reflection and celebration for every step forward, whether large or small.