

### The Brief

E AND H worked with a Local Authority who needed to make significant efficiency savings in their Adult Care Services. The project followed an extended period of change and performance improvement for the service, which operates in a highly sensitive and political environment where staff are faced with vulnerable clients and difficult decisions on a daily basis.

The assignment reviewed operational arrangements for care management services. We were asked to consider the feasibility of consolidating three care management teams into one, and whether administration and care management processes could be rationalised by introducing mobile and flexible working.

We were working with a partner consultancy who had a wide improvement brief with the Authority. E AND H were brought in to work closely with the Adult Care Service as we had successfully provided support in a social care context before.

Our brief was to engage with a forty-strong team of social work professionals to develop a shared vision and practical plan for achieving savings and improving the way things were done for everyone. We were advised that there was a lot of 'history' in the team, with a large number of the staff (and in particular the professionally trained social workers) being somewhat apprehensive about what the changes might mean for them.

The organisation had also been subject to a barrage of continual initiatives and it was accepted that they were working in an environment of 'initiative overload'. The project provided an opportunity to consolidate improvements and move towards a period of stability.



# case study

## Adult Care Services and Appreciative Inquiry

### Approach

We started with structured meetings and interviews to gather information and explore options. This informed the decision to use appreciative inquiry techniques, in a context where there was previously a belief that change was a threat. Appreciative inquiry enables thinking around what works well now, to explore options for how things can be even better in the future.

The approach proved successful at engaging, obtaining buy-in and bringing positive thinking and interaction from a mixed group of 40 participants. The group included social workers with strong views and opinions, a management team with an efficiency and savings agenda, and support staff who often felt it was difficult for them to 'have a voice'.

A positive shift in perceptions occurred with the group becoming open to new ways of working. Originally the prospect of change had not been welcomed, with the potential introduction of mobile working technology

seen as something 'that could never work' in sensitive client facing roles (in part due to previous failed initiatives). Overall the appreciative inquiry technique enabled the group to create, believe in, and each see their role in contributing to, a shared vision of the future.

To complete the process, facilitated workshops were held to develop a shared understanding of the best way to roll out the service improvements. This resulted in the preparation of a shared implementation plan and a clear commitment from the staff involved to its successful delivery.

### Benefits

With the shared vision for the future, the personal engagement of all, and the clarity and commitment that the implementation plan brought, the service was able to make change happen.

The Adult Care Service went forward with the relocation to a single site and combined

this with the consolidation of three care management teams into one. Pilots were initiated to test the use of mobile technologies and explore what additional benefits could be realised for service delivery and efficiency savings through new ways of working.

This case study remains anonymous because of the sensitive nature of the services delivered by our client.

***By using  
'Appreciative Inquiry',  
E AND H enable a  
positive shift in  
perceptions, with  
people becoming  
open to new ways  
of working.***



*A Clear Way Forward*

