

Strength Based Practice in York

Abby Hands, Acting Head of Improvement

September 2021



The next 20 minutes

- *Our strength based 'journey' so far*
- *Why we took the decision to run a strength based practice week*
- What the week entailed
- The feedback so far
- Next steps



Context

Where we've been



The Future Focus Programme

- The last 4/5 years
- Section 2 of the Care Act (Prevent, Reduce, Delay)
- Partnership with the National Development Team for Inclusion embedding an approach of Community Led Support
- Ran alongside an equally important change in Commissioning focus towards early intervention and prevention (e.g., People Helping People -LAC, LWY)



Talking Points

The image shows five overlapping feedback cards from the City of York Council. Each card has a green header with the 'Future Focus' logo and the text 'Connect with adult social care'. The cards contain handwritten feedback in blue ink. Each card also includes a question about using comments anonymously, a contact information box, and the council's name and address: 'Future Focus, FREEPOST RTEG-TYYU-KLTZ, City of York Council, West Offices, Station Rise, York YO1 6GA'.

Card 1 (Top Left):
 Title: *Order of our*
 Question: Can we use your comments anonymously? Yes No
 Comments: *Very good at making me feel supported at home. [redacted] was very gentle at office. was very helpful at providing advice*
 Contact: [redacted]

Card 2 (Top Middle):
 Question: Can we use your comments anonymously? Yes No
 Comments: *Very relaxed approach at a nice venue with everything I prefer to visit of going to the*
 Contact: [redacted]

Card 3 (Top Right):
 Title: **How did we do?**
 Question: Can we use your comments anonymously? Yes No
 Comments: *I spoke to E [redacted] who was extremely helpful. She showed a great depth of understanding for my situation, as well as offering practical support, exceeding my expectations.*
 Contact: [redacted]

Card 4 (Bottom Middle):
 Question: Can we use your comments anonymously? Yes No
 Comments: *[redacted] was very helpful, was pleased to have been seen so quickly after phoning + in such a pleasant, informal environment.*
 Contact: [redacted]

Card 5 (Bottom Right):
 Question: Can we use your comments anonymously? Yes No
 Comments: *[redacted] was very helpful, was pleased to have been seen so quickly after phoning + in such a pleasant, informal environment.*
 Contact: [redacted]



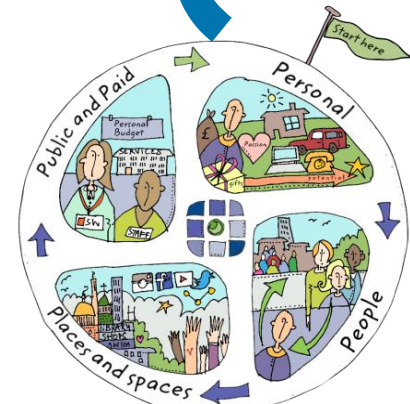
CYC Adult Social Care – Strengths-Based Workflow



Informing commissioning of unmet need

An Outcomes focussed plan

| Outcome | Q1 - Personal | Q2 - People | Q3 - Places | Q4 Paid For |
|--|--|-------------|--|---|
| What do you hope this support plan will achieve? What are the things that are important to you and what would you like to happen? | How can you make the most of your strengths, friends and/or family? Staff prompt - Consider whether a carers conversation may be needed. | | What are the local resources available in the community that could support you and how can you make the most of these? | What other support do you need and how will you pay for this? <i>For example : Assistive technology and equipment, support at home with personal care, short planned breaks.</i> |



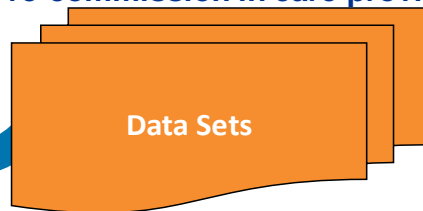
The York Model Future focus

| Public and Paid Support | Helpful information | When? | People? | Type - support? | Unit | M | T | W | T | F | S | S | Total Unit | Weekly Budget | Annual Budget |
|--|--|-----------------------|---------|---------------------------------|-------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|------------|----------------|----------------|
| Support at home with personal care, meals and transfers every day. <i>Pulled through from P2</i> | Washing, dressing, medication support and breakfast. Feed car and empty kitchen bin. Shower on Thursday. | 9am - 5pm | 1 | Agency - Biscall | Hours | 0.5 | 0.5 | 0.5 | 0.5 | 0.5 | 0.5 | 0.5 | 3.25 | 66.00 | 2480.00 |
| Correspondence, social activities and support to attend computer group. Different examples. | Joe will organise this himself with his PA. | 9am - 4pm | 1 | PA - Not yet known | Hours | 1 | | | | 2 | | | 3.00 | 26.00 | 1875.00 |
| Planned short break. <i>Pulled through from P2</i> | Joe is anxious about staying overnight so will need reassurance - 2 week break when daughter away. | July 25th - 28th 2022 | | 24hr - HC care - Adults - where | Weeks | | | | | | | 2 | 19.23 | 1000.00 | |
| Be independent - I don't have to pay of this due to my financial situation. <i>Pulled through from P2</i> | This pendant falls under and CO2 sensors | N/A | N/A | Be independent | N/A | | | | | | | | N/A | Outcome budget | Outcome budget |

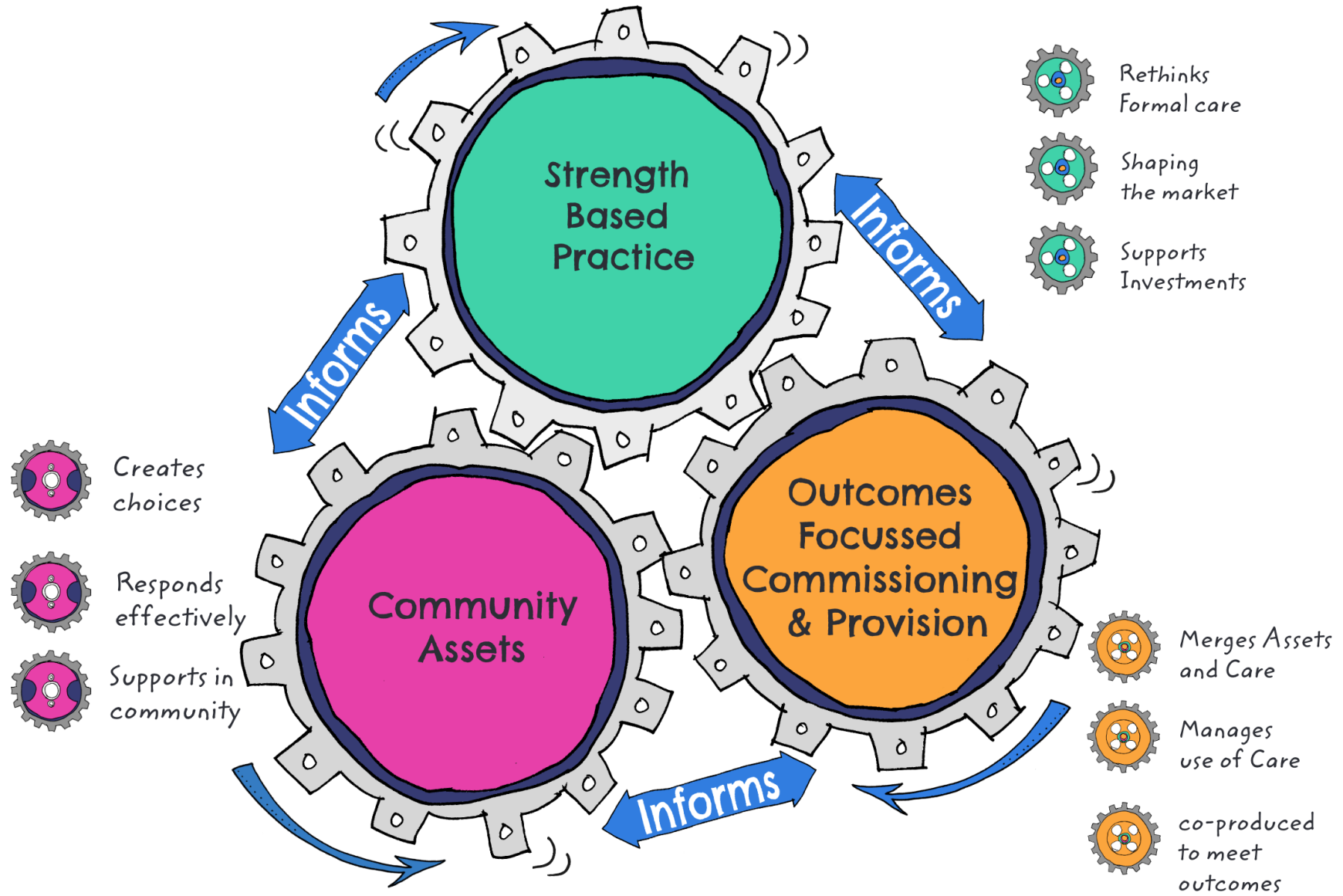
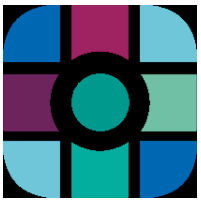
A clear understanding of the statutory care and costs – in support of Outcomes

An Outcomes Based Conversation...

Opportunities to re-invest in community and re-commission in care provision.



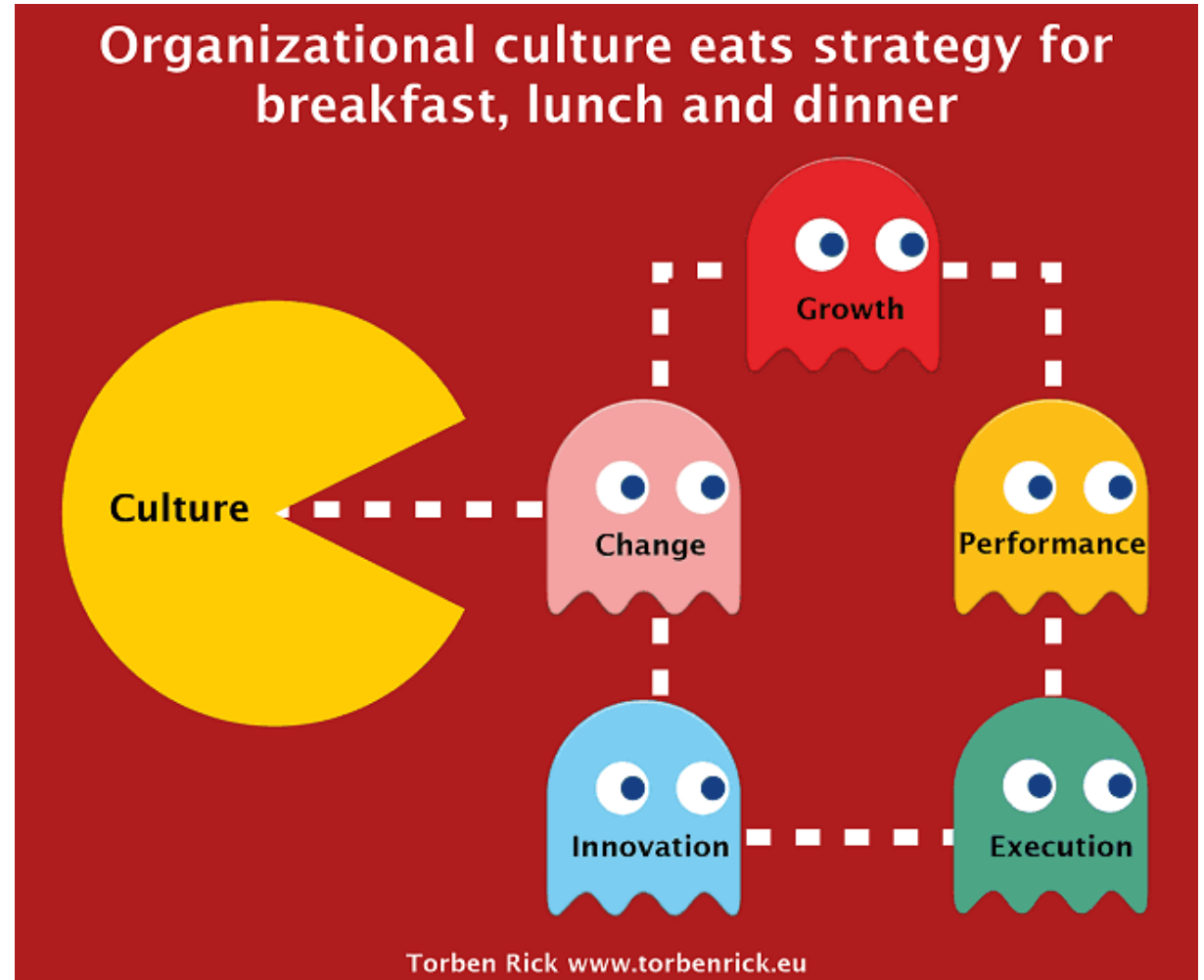
Data Sets



Recent times



We've done the 'hard stuff' (the policy, process, infrastructure), but we're still working on the 'soft stuff' (the culture)



Feedback from Staff

- We know we have work to do, and we're committed to getting this right.
- We need to have a balance between strengths and need
 - In order to access funding there can be a push for a deficit focus
- Partners need to work in this way too.
- We need a mutual relationship with our communities
- To build a meaningful relationship with someone takes time
 - Is it ok to hold waiting lists and spend more time with people?

To address the Elephants...

- This isn't a 'cutting program'-
 - Saving money is a collateral benefit and not the starting point for doing this (SBP Handbook).
 - In fact, starting from a position of demand management is wrong (King, Scie 2021)
- It isn't just Zeitgeist
 - It's part of social work proper (anti-oppressive, relationship and solution focussed, problem solving, person-centred models; systems and narrative theory...and on)
- It isn't blind optimism
 - it doesn't suppress or downplay the existence of problems
- It is a 'bit woolly' (to quote Prof Tew at recent Scie event)
 - Where's the evidence and are those doing it, doing it well?
 - Practice world moving faster than the research world



Outcome of Audit

- An audit took place at the end of 2020
- Not a full case audit – centred around support plan only
- Strengths-based audit tool used
- Found examples of “good conversations” but examples also of service/task based planning and focus on ‘care’

Yorkshire and Humber – ADASS/PSW Strengths Based Case Audit Tool

Name of Auditor & Title: Abby Hands, FF Operational Lead

Month this audit corresponds to: October

Unique Identifier: 124734 (1691081)

Team name: ASCCT

Workers Name: 'TP worker' (XXXX)

Date audit completed: 12.11.19

Service user group: mental health/carer

Team Manager: XXXX

Benchmarking Principles

1. **Wellbeing:** Adherence to Care Act Principles/Consultation/ Empowerment /Personal Choice / Participation / Advocacy / Equality & Diversity / Best Interests / Mental Capacity clearly recorded/ Person centred Approach / Outcome focused

Excellent Good Adequate Poor N/A

Please record details below:

XXX was offered the opportunity to be seen at a Talking Point which allowed her quick access to adult social care staff. This demonstrates a good offer from ASC to enable personal choice right from the point of introduction.

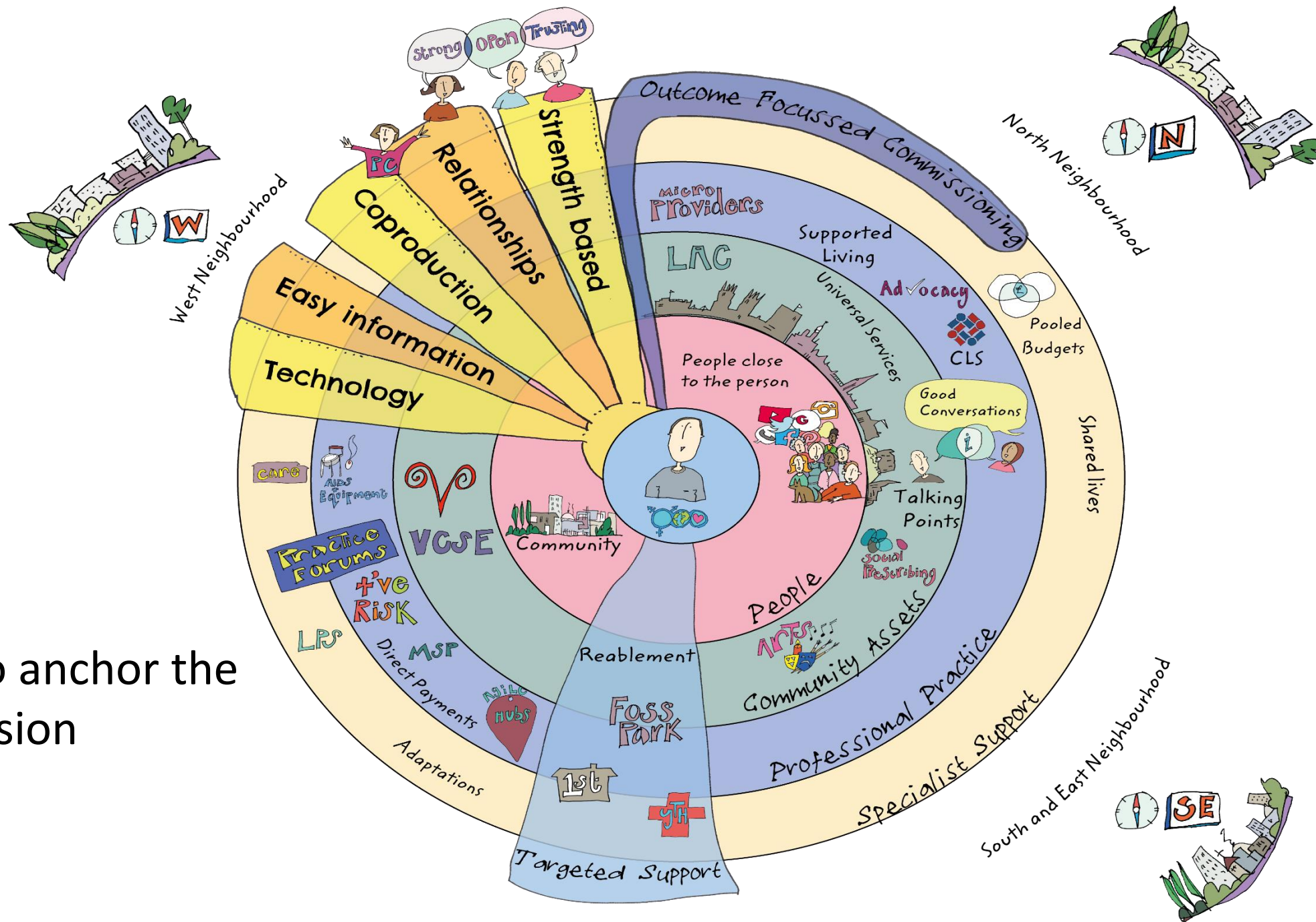
The account demonstrates the multifarious issues which matter to XXX and perhaps somewhat replicates the anxious/haphazard manner in which they were discussed. The issues raised appear to be impacting upon XXX's well being.

XXX chooses quite specifically to focus advice and support around the issues of forgetting to take medication; housing repairs; and seeking advice about future housing options. XXX's approach appears to aim at helping XXX to empower herself, as it is somewhat 'hands-off' advice and information.

In some respects, I wonder if XXX missed the opportunity to take a more holistic approach to supporting XXX given the complex and broad nature of the issues discussed. However, XXX did encourage XXX to take the steps in relation to these pressing issues and then return to a TP, so this may have been a way to breakdown the problems into manageable and prioritised 'chunks'.

XXX does highlight issues of previous abuse, and XXX chooses not to explore these. The abuse is non-recent, but there are indicators that XXX may be struggling still to recover from this- XXX could have considered the Care Act principles around aiding recovery (in s42). This is unlikely to be a service solution, but may be signposting to counselling or 3rd sector organisations.

To anchor the vision





To consider our toolkit

A sharpened focus



- A Pandemic
 - Covid-19 has created significant challenges for a strength based environment.
 - Lockdown 1 saw <7% of our community resources 'open'.
 - We've faced pressure to 'do for/to' where 'doing with' hasn't been considered safe
 - 'Being Strength Based' is one of our 5 key objectives for recovery
- A restructure
 - This year, we have transitioned away from a Housing, Health & ASC directorate and have become a People Directorate
 - Our EIP commissioner and team moved across to Communities
 - An ongoing intention toward more place based working.
- A Peer Challenge (March 2021)
 - The concept of *strength-based approach* is well understood; needs time to embed; customers saw real commitment to this principle, staff would benefit from a refresher since the original training a few years ago.

A week in June (on Zoom)



Monday

- **Opening Plenary**

- Elected members and council management team invited to attend
- A need to restate our vision and how SBP fits

- **Strength based showcase**

- Delivered by frontline workers
- 'Chris' – replaced meal provision with a cooking class
- 'Berni' – using family group work to find short breaks
- 'Ash'-One last match

- **An introduction to Deep Democracy**

- Specifically for managers, specifically about addressing culture
- Facilitate dynamic conversations to unleash engagement, creativity and excitement
- Hear all the voices in a group, including the most quiet and marginalised ones, & draw out diverse opinions
- Tap into the emotional undercurrents and wisdom of a group, learning to recognise and overcome resistance

Tuesday

- **Making strength-based working real exploring relational strength-based working in complexity**
 - Ali Gardener
 - explore how strengths-based working can be used in practice scenarios that feel complex in nature, either in terms of a person's circumstances, context, differing communication needs, and impaired or fluctuating capacity.
- **Research In Practice Webinar and reflective session**
 - PSW led session reflecting on key RiP podcasts and webinars including 'strength based conversations', 'recording strength based conversations'

Wednesday

- A rerun of the previous day, plus:
- **Systemic Practice- Curiosity Killed the Cat**
 - An overview of systemic practice from Advanced Practitioners within Children's Social Care.
 - A recognition of the similarities between our practice models
 - Encouraged colleagues to consider and apply systemic principles in their practice (whether an expert or brand new to the topic).
- **Working in Partnership: the voluntary, community & social enterprise sector in York (aka Speed dating)**
 - An opportunity to hear from local voluntary organisations in York including Beetle Bank social farm, York Neighbours, York Mind Action Towards Inclusion, Kyra, York Foodbank, Wilberforce Trust – Yorsensory, Alzheimer's society and others.

Thursday

- **Using Coaching Approaches to Innovate Social Work communication**
 - A basic introduction to the principles and practice of a coaching approach to build strengths based, change-promoting practice for those who communicate as leaders.
 - Understand how we can re-frame 'making a difference' within the social work professional identity (exploring the prevalence of the 'fixer'/rescuer archetype)
 - Practice different levels of listening, playing back and using self and silence
- **Connecting Communities**
 - An introduction to Social Prescribing in York
 - Local Area Coordination in York
 - An overview of Live Well York
 - Your role in Coproduction (Healthwatch)

Friday

- **Mosaic forms drop in**

- An opportunity to consider the fundamental tools of strength based practice- the paperwork and work steps on the case management system

- **Community Updates**

- An opportunity to learn about assets within the City and consider how they can help support the people ASC work with.
- Organisations taking part in this session included the Falls Prevention Service, York Families Wellbeing Service, Dementia Forward, Wilberforce Trust supported living, Be Independent, YorWellbeing, Ecotherapy at St Nicks and others

Impact

Early analysis



Feedback from attendees

- Comments were overwhelmingly positive
- Sessions rated as “informative and useful”.
- The top rated sessions were “Making strength-based working real”, and ‘Coaching for Managers’
- The biggest barrier to attendance was current workload
- Many reflected on use of language, recording, and engagement with support networks; and commented that they have been thoughtful about actions they can take to change their practice
- The majority requested repeat sessions with Community organisations, either because they missed it this time around, or because they had enjoyed the time to learn about what was on offer and make the connections to the work they are doing.

Key messages

- Relationships and time are crucial
- There is a desire for Strength Based Practice
- It needs to be across Place
- Language is important
- More protected 'study' and support is needed to change practice when staff feel they are "firefighting and overwhelmed".

Next steps

- Rerun sessions- More speed dating!
- Consolidation training, more reflective sessions & revived Practice forums
- Rerun Audit
- Birmingham university researchers aware of SBP week and planning evaluation accordingly
- Work with health partners to engage specifically with this agenda
- More practice weeks

Any Questions?

