



Queen's Nurse and homeless health specialist Jane Gray moved from NHS control in 2009 to form the social enterprise Inclusion Healthcare. Then there was a handful of passionate individuals, with a determination to improve provision; now Inclusion Healthcare CIC is a growing organisation with 36 staff, and 4 specialist services.

So how did they do it. Jane explains: "When the service was under threat of closure or going out to tender on the open market when the Primary Care Trust was dissolving, I represented our small healthcare team by approaching the Chairperson of the PCT to exercise our "Right to Request to Become a Social Enterprise" and for us employees to run Leicester Homeless Healthcare ourselves independently."

Having attracted early Cabinet Office funding, they developed further by successfully applying for further local health funding and national funding. In Leicester, the demand on existing services was itself proof of the need for these services. Health, social care and voluntary agencies such as YMCA had operated support for the homeless but individuals missed out through poor transitioning between services. They speculated that there was a growing number of 'hidden homeless', sofa surfing or migrants in overcrowded and unsafe accommodation.

The opening of the multi-agency hostel The Dawn Centre, featuring kennels, training courses, career and voluntary placements, nurse care, a day centre and a mental health link worker, provided a focal point not just for people to stay, but with a place where they could rebuild their health and their lives. Impact data shows that this joined up approach has had a positive effect on outcomes. Jane also reported that staff morale was very good, as staff felt supported to undertake personal training and development. Primary Care is delivered at a specialist welcoming GP Practice which has 1000 patients registered, with good co-ordination with the other GPs in Leicester. The surgery is home to an income-generating conference room which raises money for the Inch Foundation, a charity dedicated to helping the homeless transition into a home.

To further co-ordinate efforts each agency meets weekly to discuss clients with a view to solving problems constructively. Inclusion Healthcare run the local Wet House centre for entrenched street drinkers and are exploring ways of re-imagining the centre to provide a stronger public health focus. Jane explained to QNI what continues to drive her: "I knew I could make a real difference by using clinical expertise and experience at the frontline. The goal is to deliver quality care while training and developing others with an interest in working with homeless people.

The success of this partnership has been driven by a commitment to staff investment, positive communication between agencies, a patient-centred approach and health professionals recognising the need to acquire business management skills.

- For more information about Inclusion Healthcare  
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