

Hidden Insights® thinking underpins £3m funding win for three-year youth programme

Julie Tidbury was one of our trainees in West Sussex. As a team leader in the Youth Service, she found it opened up a better understanding of what young people wanted (a key principle is "don't decide about me, without me").

She also learned that small differences in how services were delivered made a big difference to the impact on the young people. One example was that a youth worker bought her client hot chocolate – with chocolate sprinkles on the top. Two things were important – the venue chosen for the conversation and the detail of the sprinkles. This small piece of listening made the young person more confident that she would be understood.

By changing the conversation about how best to support vulnerable young people, and applying key Hidden Insights principles of:

- Build on what works
- Understand how it works
- Use and create evidence

Julie firstly was able to streamline her offer, with £70,000 funding from the Troubled Families Initiative. She recruited a new team who could prove that they worked to these principles. She also used the principles in supervisions, to build a positive culture. She piloted ways of helping 400 young people in Crawley and Bognor overcome mental health problems.

As money grew tighter, Julie worked intensively with service users, GPs and charities to get a shared understanding of the problems and solutions, knowing that CAMHS could not support the number of young people presenting with problems. She was able build a business case for tier 2 services and bid for money for vulnerable young people with mental health issues that were not critical enough to meet the threshold for NHS mental health support.

By creating evidence of the demand, and the details of HOW young people wanted to be helped, she focused on the most effective support, and won funding from the NHS itself because she could show it would reduce demand on their mental health provision. A team of 16 has been brought together working across West Sussex to support 5000 young people.

