

# SANDWELL AND WEST BIRMINGHAM NHS TRUST

## Trust Board – January 2024

### Patient Story:

#### **Summary of the Story :-**

Michael Mendes was brought to City Hospital via ambulance in September 2023. He was experiencing severe pain in his groin area. This was as a result of an abscess which developed as a consequence of intravenous heroin use. He was later transferred to Sandwell hospital where he has stayed on ward Newton 3 since and undergone 4 operations. Michael requires rehabilitation, likely at Rowley Regis, before he can be discharged from hospital. His transfer away from Newton 3 is near.

Mr Mendes describes how addiction took over his life and his loss of control over the addiction. He talks through both the medical and physical symptoms of his drug use, in particular when he withdraws from using and how easily the addiction returns when presented with the temptation to use again.

He describes what it is like and how it feels to have addiction; the shame, particularly in relation to his family, and stigmatisation he feels and the way he feels compromised in his attempts to stay off heroin when he returns to the environment where drug-taking is common.

Mr Mendes has recognised what he needs to do to reduce his risk in using drugs again and he describes the importance of his family in this. He asks staff to consider the needs of individual people and what may have taken them to where Mr Mendes found himself.

#### **What are the key lessons / themes to emerge from this story?**

The story exemplifies the importance of the work being taken through the Personalisation and Experience workstream of Fundamentals of care in how we can improve someone's experience of care and outcomes through seeing the person behind a condition or the label.

Evidence reflects discrimination and stigmatisation felt by those addicted and Mr Mendes himself highlights how this can increase an individual's emotional pain, which can encourage their further drug use. Where people show compassion and understanding this has the opposite impact.

The story will contribute to a further personalisation study day to take place in March 2024 focussing on the needs of vulnerable people.

The Vulnerabilities, Safeguarding and Patient Experience Teams are now working closely as projects contain overlapping tasks and goals.