



Social Care: Past and Present

How MERIT Works

THE TELEPHONE RINGS & OPERATOR ANSWERS:

Good morning, MERIT scheme, can I help you?

V/o:

MERIT is a one-stop shop. People can be referred by doctors, but often carers ring up and contact the MERIT team themselves as Alison Diskin, the CPN, explains:

Alison Diskin:

Well the details are usually taken over the 'phone and then the case will be assessed for its urgency. If it's felt that it that it can maybe wait a few days for the usual allocation meeting, then so be it. If not, whoever's got, you know, free time will go out more or less immediately if they think it's a very urgent case.

V/o:

The potential user is visited by a consultant psychiatrist who is part of the MERIT team making the initial joint assessment.

Alison:

The psycho-geriatrician usually gets involved on the initial visit which is very handy, because again it cuts down the assessment time, we know exactly what we're dealing with, and quite often it's a GP who's referred who wants a diagnosis. All the clients and their family, their carers, really do want to know, you know, what is wrong, and of course being nurses, social workers, we're not allowed to do that though quite often we're quite sure what it is from an early stage.

V/o:

Where the assessment takes place is also a key factor.

Alison:

Always in the person's home, unless somebody specifically asks to be seen here, but it's not an ideal place for assessment, and part of the assessment anyway is looking at how somebody lives, perhaps again if somebody has dementia you can give a good indication of how well they're coping at home, you know what sort of situation they're living in, it can give you an idea as to the help that's going to be required. Usually you can tell on the first visit what's going to be needed and you would go straight ahead and set up the services because quite often people are desperate for the services so we'd do that before we talk the results of the assessment back to the care management team.

Alison:

Hello Mrs Jones, hello Mrs Hayes. Hi love.

Reply:

Hello love.

V/o:

Mrs Jones is one of the people on Alison's case list. Her daughter, Mrs Hayes, is in no doubt what she thinks about MERIT.

Mrs Hayes:

I'm still in awe of it really 'cos I can't believe that when I asked for help just by making an appointment with the doctor, I left the doctor's at 11.20 and I'd made an appointment for myself, and I made an appointment with my Mum, without my Mum there, and I told him of my

concerns, and at half past one, you know just over the two hours later, I get a 'phone call from MERIT who I didn't know anything about as such. Right away they would make an appointment for us, you know, and it's just gone on, and the thing that I find quite surprising in this day and age is that I haven't had to fill one form in, I haven't had to make so many 'phone calls and hang on, and wait for people to come back to me and get people in, and that's what I find is so fantastic.

Alison:

I was hoping to have a chat with you, Anne, about the other things that we set up for you after we first met you, and one of the things that has been set up is your home care worker, you know, is it Alicia?

Mrs Jones:

Yes.

Alison:

Has she been helpful? Has it made a difference to you?

Mrs Jones:

Yes, very much, very much.

Alison:

What sort of things does she help you with when she comes?

Mrs Jones:

Well it's all in the morning, all in the morning that she does, and I'm very helpful because I am tired, I'm tired in the morning when I've slept nearly all night, but I hadn't slept all night. Anyway it's, when she comes in she Hoovers up for me and she puts, I'm looking at that thing there, chopping it up, that does it.

Alison:

The communication cord, you mean, yeah?

Mrs Jones:

That's done it, that's done it.

Alison:

So she makes you a cup of tea?

Mrs Jones:

She comes, and tea and then she comes and she does, I don't let her do any clothes, washing or anything like that, she just does morning work, and then she gets on, you know.

Alison:

So does she see to your breakfast for you?

Mrs Jones:

Yeah, and one day last week, what did I do?

Mrs Hayes:

You were in bed weren't you when they came? So she made you a cup of tea and she said you were like Lady Muck there in bed, 'cos I rang up to see how she was getting on, and she said Mum's fine.

Alison:

The other thing, Anne, you've been doing some work with a colleague of mine, another Alison in OT, Occupational Therapist. I know she's been doing some work in the kitchen with you because one of the things you were getting a bit muddled with was making the tea, making yourself a cup of tea. How have you been getting on with her?

Mrs Jones:
Alright.

Mrs Hayes:
She said you was really good this week, didn't she Mam?

Mrs Jones:
Yes.

Mrs Hayes:
She is.

Alison:
And is she coming every week to do different things with you?

Mrs Hayes:
She's coming again next Monday, isn't she?

Alison:
I mean have they found a way round your difficulties in the kitchen yet?

Mrs Jones:
No.

Alison:
No, they're still looking at that.

Mrs Jones:
I don't know

Mrs Hayes:
They're still looking, they still think it's a spatial, you know, but they watch, one of the exercises is watching Mum have some soup because she tends to sort of dribble things down her.

V/o:
Although Alison is a Community Psychiatric Nurse on the MERIT team, like her colleagues, she's called a Care Manager.

Alison:
We're very fortunate in that as nurses we're also care managers because this gives us access to social services funding which we can access directly, whereas in the olden days we used to have to refer on to a social worker for things like day care, respite care, etcetera, but now under the care management role we take responsibility for that as well, so we're pretty much doing the role that, the job that the social worker would have done in the past.

V/o:
Nevertheless the team does include a qualified social worker, Olwyn Stevenson. She explains how at the weekly meetings, which include the manager and an occupational therapist, the cases are distributed.

Olwyn:
I suppose it depends really on our current workload that particular week. If we're very busy then, you know, we wouldn't volunteer to take a case, but I mean if we have a special interest in a case if one of us, you know, I suppose we all have certain skills, you know different skills; CPN's have different skills to myself. I mean I'm interested in bereavement counselling so if there was a case where somebody was, you know, suffering from a normal grief reaction then I may put a bid in, if you like, so it just varies really. It depends on who has space to take on a case, or if you have a special interest in a particular angle of a mental health case.

V/o:

Olwyn likes the way the system works.

Olwyn:

I think it offers very much a sort of a multi-disciplinary approach to problems like a social/medical approach that looks at, you know, the whole person, and I think because, you know, of our sort of collaborative sort of work approach I think we work together, and I think we offer something different really to, you know, maybe a social worker in an area office, you know because we have that team approach. The supervision and any sort of reporting back takes place within the team; the meetings we have on a Tuesday are also for discussion of any cases, we can bring any cases for discussion if we're having any particular problems with a case, or if we want to discuss it with a psychiatrist because he's always present at the meeting. The kind of supports I would offer a client would be the whole range of services that Rochdale had to offer from home care, day care, meals on wheels, we have a very good caring at home service where we can provide a sitter for the client to relieve the carer, we also you know support the carers as well, I think that's a very important part of the job. It will just depend on the particular problems that we'd been presented, and I would obviously try and find some solution and use, you know, and tap into whatever services that, you know, we have on offer.

Care worker:

No, no, I don't live here.

Doris:

You live here?

Care worker:

No, you live here.

Doris:

I live here do I - with Marjorie?

Care worker:

You live here with Marjorie.

Doris:

On my own?

Care worker:

No, you and Marjorie live here together, don't you, and we come to see you.

Doris:

I don't want to be on my own.

Care worker:

No, you're not on your own, you've got Marjorie.

Alison:

Doris and Marjorie are supported by MERIT. Doris has dementia and is cared for by her daughter Marjorie, who has learning disability. They are visited on a daily basis by Mavis Shorrocks, one of four specialist home care workers available to MERIT.

Mavis:

Alright, that's done, Marjorie. Shall we put the light on then? Right, so what's your mum had today?

Marjorie:

She's had, what's she had that thing you give her this morning.

Mavis:

Yes, she had egg on toast.

Marjorie:

And then she had, she didn't have anything after you'd gone so I give her a bacon sandwich.

Mavis:

That's very good.

Marjorie:

She ate it all.

Mavis:

Did she?

Marjorie:

Yes.

Mavis:

That's good, so she can have another cup of tea now, can't she?

Marjorie:

Oh, will she be able to have some custard at teatime?

Mavis:

Yeah, she will.

Marjorie:

Yeah.

Mavis:

And what are you going to have?

Marjorie:

We don't know yet, we might have a little tin of salmon, we might have that for our tea.

Mavis shorrocks:

It started off just Doris because obviously with Doris's dementia and things it was Doris we were coming to look at and I was concerned that she wasn't looking after herself and, you know, seeing to herself, and we were concerned like that Marjorie wasn't able to support her mum as much as her mum needed, and that's how it started off, and that was only like only two visits a week. It took quite a bit to get a relationship 'cos sometimes they wouldn't let us go in, we couldn't get in, so it was just sort of trial and error when we did go in, it was just taking things ever so slow like, you know, and careful and not upsetting anybody. And then we did progress a little bit more to actually seeing to Doris's personal needs but it did take a long time to do that, whereas now she co-operates quite well. But while we was observing Doris we also noticed that Marjorie had needs herself, but you know we were quite concerned about the fact that she wasn't eating properly, things that she was eating were sort of snack things, chocolates, biscuits, things like that. We'd asked for a long, long time did she want to come out with us which there was always some excuse she didn't, and then they did need a new fridge. I said well you know, I said don't know what you like, why don't you come with me, and she did, and from then on it seems to have taken off. Now she's going out every week now, I know it's only a Friday and she has a couple of hours on a Friday, but it's give her that boost and she seems to have been something to look forward to because all the conversation was, was surrounding her mum.

Mavis:

What happens on Fridays?

Marjorie:

We go out and have a meal.

Mavis:

Do you? And is this, is this, do you choose where to go?

Marjorie:

We go anywhere, don't we?

Mavis:

Whatever you like to do, sometimes you like to do some shopping first, don't you?

Marjorie:

Yeah.

Mavis:

And what happens to your mother when you go out?

Marjorie:

Well somebody looks after her, don't they?

Mavis:

Yeah, one of the other girls come in and looks after Doris.

Mavis:

She's taken an interest again now in buying sort of clothes for herself, so we've built that confidence up, so really their both needs are as equal I would think, no perhaps Doris's a little bit more because she's not independent, but I think their needs are quite equal, it's quite good that we've been able to pick up on it, you know to see things before they actually go into a, which could be a crisis situation really.

Mavis:

Alright?

Doris:

Yeah.

Mavis:

Right, OK. Right Doris, are you alright, are you alright? Marjorie's making you a cup of tea. Marjorie's making you a cup of tea now.

Doris:

Pardon?

Mavis:

Marjorie's making you a cup of tea.

Doris:

A cup of tea, yes, now, go on then.

Mavis:

Alright.

Doris:

Bring it then.

Mavis:

Marjorie's making it for you, Marjorie's making it.