

## TrACE CASE STUDY: Barod

Barod is committed to providing high-quality, free and confidential support and guidance to anyone who is affected by drug or alcohol use, either their own or someone else's; and raising awareness about the ways everyone can help to reduce the harm caused by substance use. Barod offers a wide range of services in South East and West Wales, including; young person's services, friends & family support, group work, drop-in, harm reduction activities and relapse prevention.

The Barod vision is to be recognised by its key stakeholders as the leading provider of innovative and quality services within the drug and alcohol field. Barod is guided by both National strategy and international evidence when they develop their services.

### Changes made in line with the TrACE Toolkit

#### Governance, leadership and organisation culture



##### Statement of commitment

*"Barod is an organisation that recognises our staff and service users may be people who have experienced/are experiencing trauma and/or Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs). We acknowledge that this is only one aspect of their identity and does not define them. You will find that Barod's workforce are equipped with the skills and knowledge to reduce the impact of trauma and re-traumatisation. Our staff use compassionate, inclusive approaches to ensure relationships are safe and nurturing, allowing people to heal, build resilience and focus on their strengths. Barod's culture is one of choice, collaboration and empowerment to prevent, mitigate and tackle ACEs and the impact of these on our future generations."*

In their Annual Report 2023-24, Barod's values are stated as integrity, empathy, positive attitude and adaptability. Their mission is to provide support, information and advocacy to those who are vulnerable and marginalised as a result of their own or someone else's drug and/or alcohol use, in order to improve their physical, social and emotional well-being.

Interviews with Barod staff suggest it is recognised that being trauma-informed is a constant part of the organisational culture, with it being consistently on the agenda in meetings, away days, and communications, ensuring it remains a central focus. Many initiatives have been implemented to ensure all staff understand the organisation's commitment to working in a trauma-informed way.

## Policies and procedures



In their TrACE Annual Report 2023-24, it is stated that trauma and ACE-informed practice has been a priority for the organisation, becoming embedded into key organisational objectives and work strands, and considered in the review of all policies and procedures. In the Ripple Effect Mapping (REM)<sup>1</sup> session, staff highlighted that policies had been shortened to help staff use them more effectively.

Interviews with Barod staff indicated that the most significant change has been the overhaul of the recruitment process, led by their Recruitment and Volunteer Coordinator. This includes making the process more trauma-informed, with clearer communication, interview preparation, and accommodations, resulting in a less stressful and more inclusive experience. Some staff we interviewed told us that feedback from candidates has been overwhelmingly positive, noting the kinder, more supportive approach.

For current staff members, the shift to a trauma-informed approach includes an open-door policy, which enables staff to highlight access issues or voice concerns, which are then escalated to relevant teams. It was also mentioned that HR are now involved in the TrACE working group and are working on revising sick and compassionate leave policies.

## Workforce training and support



In Barod's TrACE Annual Report 2023-24, more detail is provided on the revised recruitment process which has been reviewed through a trauma-informed lens with several changes being made, including:

- Job descriptions in advertising have been condensed to make them less intimidating for candidates
- Pre-interview information has been revised to include directions of how to get to the location of the interview along with the contact details of the hiring manager
- Candidates can now preview the interview questions at the start of their interview and make notes to support their answers

In addition, Barod's approach to training has shifted to be more trauma-informed, focusing on preparing participants for sensitive topics and offering support if needed. There have been challenges with training rollout, but more specialist training has been incorporated into the workforce development programme over the past six months. E-learning is being developed with a trauma-informed training package made mandatory for staff.

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<sup>1</sup> This was a session facilitated by the evaluation team with staff members who had been involved in implementing the TrACE Toolkit. The purpose of the session was to understand if and how changes had led to impacts.

## Physical environment



Barod have made significant progress in this domain. They have created an audit form to help review their physical spaces. The audit includes perspectives from staff, service users and volunteers. As a result, they have made several changes:

- In Cardiff, an environmental audit was conducted with a group of young people, which resulted in the base being redecorated.
- In Cwm Taf Morgannwg, a grant was secured from Keep Wales Tidy to improve the allotment space in Bridgend and the office entry system and reception area were improved to be more relaxing and welcoming.
- In Dyfed, office environments have been improved for service users making them more accessible, comfortable, friendly and more informal.
- In Gwent N-gage, changes have been made to the main office base, including a redesign of the large drop-in room now 'The Hwb') and smaller 1:1 rooms.

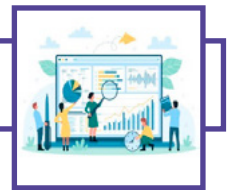
During interviews with Barod staff it was stated that despite differences in service types and building requirements, each service has made positive changes, and the development of the audit tool is considered one of their biggest achievements. Several mentioned fewer locked doors and a more welcoming reception, along with fidget tools, a fish tank, a 'Zen' room, a big drop-in room, lighting, and better signage. In the REM session, staff also mentioned the free necessities that are provided in communal spaces.

## Service design and delivery



Barod have incorporated TrACE into their bidding process, where every contract bid now references trauma-informed care throughout, not just at the end. This ensures that trauma awareness is embedded in service delivery from the start. During the recent recommissioning process for services in Gwent, trauma-informed practices were fully embedded into the bid responses.

## Monitoring and evaluation



Barod have systems in place to collect data from a range of sources:

- Service users provide feedback via the Service User Final Thoughts form.
- Barod collected baseline data with staff regarding the understanding of a trauma-informed approach, the level of confidence in delivering a trauma-informed approach, and the importance of the organisation upholding this approach. This data was collected in September 2023 and repeated in December 2024.
- A Physical Environment Audit Tool has been developed for staff to fill in, which asks for their detailed comments about the look of the service through the client's or staff member's eyes depending on the area being audited. They are asked to walk through the building, experiencing the initial reception and interview process, as well as staff induction and working practices, documenting their thoughts and feelings at each stage. The audit covers detailed questions about the outside of the building, point of entry, reception area, interview spaces, group/

meeting spaces, needle exchange, exit from the building, staff office area, kitchen and break facilities and toilet facilities.

- During staff development days, Barod gather feedback on changes using QR codes for data collection, which informs TrACE steering group decisions.
- Service managers are also encouraged to include TrACE in their contract reporting for added accountability.

## Evidence of Impact

### Service user feedback

The Service User Final Thoughts Forms Report, saw 100% of the sample (37 service users) agreeing that they would recommend the service to someone else; that it was easy to find the service; and that they could access the service in their preferred way. Detailed comments about the quality of the service included:

**100%**  
of service users  
would recommend  
the service to  
someone else

*“Everyone had a good understanding – I felt understood and staff saw the dark side of addiction that was affecting me” (Service user)*

*“Feel like the service helped her see things in a different way just knowing someone was there at the end of the phone helped immensely, thanks so much.” (Family member)*

### Staff feedback

#### New recruitment process

Feedback on the new recruitment and induction process has been positive. In the Welcome Survey, 32 staff were interviewed, and the job application form was scored highly (4.66), with 75% agreeing that they received an interview sheet prior to interview, containing information on where to go and what to expect.

They were given time at the start of the interview to look at the questions (88%) and given the opportunity to request any adjustments that they required throughout the interview (97%). The communications throughout the recruitment process were highly praised (4.66) and once in the job role, the vast majority were satisfied with the quality of the induction, equipment, sickness procedures, booking holidays, claiming expenses and arranging a 4-week review.

Similarly, during the REM session, staff described how the changes they had made to their recruitment process, including pre-interview phone calls and familiarisation videos had led to increased attendance at interviews. They described an occasion where a new member of staff (who had been through the new process) was working with a service user who was very anxious about

*“The extensive preparation material significantly benefitted me, as it alleviated much of the anxiety typically associated with attending interviews.”*

attending the building and wasn't going to make their appointment. The staff member decided to share the familiarisation video and instructions of how to get there with the service user, which led to them keeping their appointment.

### **Improved understanding of trauma and ACEs**

Based on data collected by Barod, staff report improved understanding of TrACE, with 79% of staff reporting a good or excellent understanding in 2024 compared to 60% in 2023. Similarly, when asked how confident they feel in delivering a trauma-informed approach, 71% of staff felt good or fully confident in 2024, compared to 43% in 2023.