



## The care exchange - Series 3 Episode 8: Our aim is to break down barriers: Aeon Anderson, Operations manager

**Hosts:** Pia Rathje-Burton and Wendy Adams

**Pia Rathje-Burton** 00:07

Welcome to the care exchange, the Skills for Care podcast in managers and social care. I'm Pia Rathje-Burton,

**Wendy Adams** 00:13

and I'm Wendy Adams.

**Pia Rathje-Burton** 00:14

Today on the podcast, we've got Aeon Anderson, who is the supported housing manager working for the African-Caribbean community initiative. The organisation support African Caribbean individuals with mental health issues, and Aeon is the registered manager for a supported living service. And he also managed a number of community service and outreach team.

**Wendy Adams** 00:36

So prior to his current role, he worked as a consultant, and he worked in learning and development during this episode, Aeon talks about members and by members, he means the people that his organisation supports.

**Pia Rathje-Burton** 00:51

So looking forward to talking to him today. So on with the show.

**Pia Rathje-Burton** 01:04

So welcome to the care exchange. Thanks for joining us today.

**Aeon Anderson** 01:08

Thanks for having me.

**Pia Rathje-Burton** 01:09

It's really great to see you. So we heard in the introduction there that you work for an organisation called that I make sure I get this right, the African Caribbean community initiative, which is a ACCI, is that how you normally say it?

**Aeon Anderson** 01:23

That's correct.

**Pia Rathje-Burton** 01:24

Excellent.

**Aeon Anderson** 01:24

So normally,

**Pia Rathje-Burton** 01:26

and that's an an organisation that supports people from an African-Caribbean background. What are the sort of benefits of having a service that provides support to individuals from a specific ethnic background?

**Aeon Anderson** 01:42

There are lots of benefits. Being a bespoke service, we understand the you know, the community we're working with, there's also the element of the community trust us, you know, we unfortunately, it's a situation whereby nine out of ten times, once family members or individuals have actually come to us, they've actually been around the reaking a lot of the time beforehand, didn't understand what was happening, you know, and we're just able to just work with them, and explain things break things down. And really just sort of regurgitate things in a language that they understand. Especially when you're working in the field of mental health, it's, you know, you can be very confusing sometimes there's, there's so much information to digest and take in, if you're not a professional, you probably wouldn't even understand most of it. And the reality is nine out of ten people are not going to say they understand because they don't want to be seen as stupid. Or you can sort of say yes, in agreement when they've already got the faintest idea what's actually transpiring. So that's a little gap. I mean, there's lots of lots of things, that's just one as an example, also, whether you like it or not, there are just specific things that relate specifically to various communities. And whether you like it or not, you know, there are a lot of black individuals are seen as loud and, you know, threatening and big. And that's from the media and the police and all kinds of different other avenues. And so that's the perception, a lot of the time, very negative and it's a shame, really, but that's just some of the realities of life. So it's about being in a position to sort of challenge those stereotypes, but challenge them in, in, in the forums that they need to be challenged. But in a particular way, not everybody can do that. It does, you know, it does take certain people to come and arbitrate. And one of the things that ACCI has been able to do is we are there in all the forums. You know, we you know, we work with the police, we work with housing, we work with the mental health teams, you know, they know who we are, and after nearly 40 years being in existence, we're also the go to people to come to when there are crisis's or there are interventions needed. Specifically, you know, aimed at the African Caribbean community.

**Pia Rathje-Burton 04:20**

Yeah, I can see that that makes complete sense. Are there any disadvantages?

**Aeon Anderson 04:26**

Yes. The disadvantages can be you know, if you're not familiar with the service and aware of what we do and what we've done, and actually what we offer, it can be the sort of our list of black organisations so we don't need to take them serious or, you know, didn't actually know as much as what they should do. The stereotype still exists. But what we love them, we meet them head on, you know, we challenge them head on and, you know, one of our aims is to break down the barriers, you know, yes, we're about offering a very good service to the people we're supporting. Yes, we're about supporting the community. But we're also about breaking down barriers. And you can only do that from within.

**Wendy Adams 05:09**

Yeah. You've talked about the benefits for the people your support. Do...are most of your staff then also from an African Caribbean background?

**Aeon Anderson 05:19**

And most of them are? Yeah, yeah. Yes. Mostly they are.

**Pia Rathje-Burton 05:23**

Yeah. And how does that work? It's?

**Aeon Anderson 05:28**

Well, quite easily, really, because as you know, there'll be certain, there's various legislation that allows you to recruit specifically, if you've got a specific need for a specific client group, which we, which we do. So, and for us, it's very much about if you take the units that I'm managing, for example, we're dealing with people with acute mental health issues, okay. And part of being able to work with them just on a daily basis is about them, seeing people who look like them, who are aware of them, who were able to sort of speak to them in another language. You know, there is times when I'm speaking to other clients, when I will recognise you make a pattern because they understand pathways. And it sounds silly, and it's a smooth, simple thing. But it's an important thing. Also, just in terms of communication, as well, there are times when, you know, I mean, I've been to various situations that have, you know, I suppose been kicking off, if you want to call it that at the time, and I think the biggest disadvantage to the individual who was in the middle of the crisis was not being understood by the people around them, trying to help them. You know, that individual is not interpreting those visuals as trying to help them and they are, but it's about that interpretation. And it's about that vision, you've also got stereotypes, both sides. So you know, there are those individuals that are, you know, weary and scared of the police or scared of anybody in a suit. And, you know, but it really does exist, it really is that, and it's about just understanding those different dynamics. Because once you're able to do that, then the whole arbitration thing comes into example, like for instance, you know, sitting down going with somebody to a meeting, about their housing need, who understands them, but also is able to articulate what's needed to the professionals, it's a win win for both sides, it makes it a lot easier, a lot simpler for the person, you know, trying to do their job and support them from that side. And it's a lot for, you know, the member

client, but we call it members, it's a lot for the member actually being listened to being understood, and actually achieving what it is they want to achieve.

**Pia Rathje-Burton 07:40**

And how do you recruit? How does that happen?

**Aeon Anderson 07:44**

We haven't...yeah, well, we, like all organisations, we have an application form that people fill in, they send in, we then have a obviously a shortlist scenario, then once we've shortlisted we interview, and you've been doing it for a long time, how i'm supposed to hopefully to chose some of the best people, you can put whatever you like, on an application form, anything you like, you know, skies, blue, green, yellow, pink with spotss. You know, there are times we'll look at application forms, and the first thing we think is, oh, wow, can't wait to interview this person, this person is going to be fabulous. They sit in front of you, and you think you didn't write your application form, do you know what I mean? Just because of the you know, and then there are others that common actually might not have as much in the way of paper and qualifications, but that passion and the drive, and it's about just trying to find the best people. I mean, y'all know, we're in a market right now where everybody's short on staff everybody's struggling to recruit. And, you know, even when you recruit, there's that little short window, where you get to actually, you know, find out with people you have recruited and for me, you know, it hasn't been great in recent times. But that's a challenge, right across health and social care. You know what I mean?

**Pia Rathje-Burton 09:09**

So if you're recruiting for so most social care providers will say, Oh, it's really difficult to recruit, and they pool of people that they're recruiting from, it's quite small, but obviously, because you are specifically aiming to recruit people from the same ethnic background as to the people you're supporting. You have an even smaller pool is that right?

**Aeon Anderson 09:35**

but I will say we will interview anybody, right? Absolutely. No, no, no, no, no, we'll interview absolutely anybody. You see, for us, it's about that communication. It's about the individual. Like I said, we have got a couple of staff, we will not African-Caribbean and that's just pretty much just absolutely fantastic staff, regardless of who they're working with, you know what I mean? And that's just about, but that's what those qualities are far and sort of few between.

**Pia Rathje-Burton 09:59**

Yeah, And I suppose it's also about your you've talked a lot about community that you're in a very sort of kind of in an area where people know who you are, and therefore recruiting some of those people who are perhaps already aware of your of the communities that you have.

**Aeon Anderson 10:15**

Yeah, I mean, one of the things is that you've got to bear in mind these, our niche is we're aimed at the community around that, that is our niche. There's, you know, 1000s, and 1000s and 1000s of providers. And one of the first questions whether it's commissioning, whether it's social, whoever it's like, well, what's your, you know, what's your USP? Well, our USP is this, you see?

**Aeon Anderson** 10:44

A lot of people are very, very scared to talk about race or scared to talk about dynamics, people tend to oh, we don't really want to talk about these or talk about that. We don't want to go there. And I think it's really important.

**Pia Rathje-Burton** 10:57

Yeah, great. So important. So you have staff working in more than one location? Is that right?

**Aeon Anderson** 11:05

Oh, my God. Yes. Yeah, you have, we have various staff teams, obviously. So you know, there's the outreach team, there's the Housing Support team based in the units. There's the day centres teams, but we meet on a regular basis we have, so we have our individual team meetings, but then we also have group meetings. We have what's known as care plan every Friday, where we actually discuss every department and every individual in every department that we're supporting. So it keeps that link alive. Also, they are some of the outreach staff or some of the staff who work in the day centre or work in their wellbeing hub. Sorry, we work in the unit, it's on the weekend. Yeah. Do you know what I mean? And also, we work across. So if we're doing a trip somewhere, or we're going out staff or, you know, we'll mix staff from from from different departments, very fluid, very fluid.

**Wendy Adams** 11:59

I'm interested in how you create that sense of team where you've got people in your team from different cultures. And the reason I'm asking that is because certainly in some areas of the country, and I guess particularly where I'm from up in the, in the northeast, we're having lots of discussions about international recruitment, and how we make people feel part of a team, where there may be two or three people who've come from a different culture to everybody else who, who works in that organisation. And I was interested in what you were saying, because you almost did the other way around, and that the majority of your staff are African Caribbean, and then you've got a few others. How do you bridge that gap and create that feeling of teamwork?

**Aeon Anderson** 12:51

I can tell you, it starts from the top. It starts from the top, and I'll give you an example of what I mean. Our Chief Exec is well known for saying I am nobody and I am nobody special. I'm here to offer service and do what I do. Well, if the chief exec, and she's nobody special, then I'm fine. Nobody else has anything special either. So, you know, do not be standing on any airs and graces around here, because we don't, you know, that's not what we're about. We're the totally the opposite end of the spectrum. And the one of the things that we've done in ACCI, it's a fundamental basic embedded into everything we do, is we really consider our organisation of family. And that's kind of, you know, that that is the basis of everything we do. You know, not only are we representing families and individuals, for families, we consider ourselves a family. And that's what we try to instil not only in the workforce, but in putting the in within the people we're working with. Because it's very important, because, you know, there are different areas, people work in different areas, but mental health is what we do. That's our niche. That's our thing. That's what we do. And, you know, with that comes a lot of complicated individuals who are suffering from various things. And, you know, a very important factor in being able to work with some of

the people we work with is that trust, they have to have that trust. You know, you've got to earn their trust, because, and that's the difference between when they're not very well, and the somebody's trying to help them, they're kicking off and it's going off, you're the voice that says hold on. It's okay. Nobody's here to hurt you. They actually want to help. And that's the voice they're gonna listen to, because that's the voice they trust. And that's and that takes time and it's hard, but that's the basics.

**Wendy Adams 14:57**

And that sort of leads me on to sort of Here's the thing that I was thinking about, which is about your own workforce wellbeing, not just the well being of the people who provide care and support your but your actual workforce. Before I came to Skills for Care, my background was mental health, and it can be a very challenging, emotional, emotionally as a worker, it can be a very challenging area to work in. And I was wondering what you what you do to support your staff with their well being, you've alluded to being part of a family and family feeling, but it's stuff that you do as well.

**Aeon Anderson 15:32**

But there's, there's lots of things and I'm telling you now. We can't do the work we do without the staff. And we have to make sure that the staff are well. And we have to make sure that the staff know, the support is there and feel the support is there, when things do get hairy and things do get hairy. And you know, and all other things. And I'm not just just I'm not just saying this for the sake of saying it, what team meetings important, it's an important time for people to share it and important time people to a supervision when you haven't One to One was that it's very important. Also, you know, if I use myself, as an example, I have an open door policy, it's very important. Some people say that isn't the case. But mine is the case. And it has to be the case. Because depending on where an individual is, at a particular moment in time, can really affect the support that they're giving or they're offering. It's also about you as the person leading the team and managing the team, being observant, being in tune to your staff. You know, I know my staff, you can say to me, an individual said a sentence I could tell you or not whether or not they did or they didn't. And it's just been that intuitive. It's been vacuumed in to the staff around it's also been able to preempt things as well. One of the things that we're very lucky, I say very lucky well it is lucky is that a lot of the people we support, we've been supporting them for years and years and years and years and years. So we know them. Okay. I know what Joe Bloggs is going to be like when they returned from hospital. I know what Joe Bloggs is like when they're becoming unwell. You do not I mean, it's about being able to say, Okay, this is happening, we know where this is going. Okay, we need to plan for this and actually do plan for it. Because nine out of ten times if you plan for it, it doesn't have to be as bad as it could be. Or you don't have to reach the crisis that you do do. I mean, you know, I could give you some some examples where, unfortunately, intervention should have been made by external agencies and organisations. And it wasn't. But luckily, for me, because I plan for every eventuality, including them not actually doing what they're supposed to do when they're supposed to do it. Damage limitation. Yeah. And it's that and that, that really just comes from experience and comes from knowing the staff, knowing the people you're working with. And you really do have to be intuitive and intuned.

**Pia Rathje-Burton 18:14**

Yeah. And it's some of that planning, when you're planning this kind of stuff, welfare. Is that?



**Aeon Anderson 18:22**

Yeah, I mean, listen, we do everything that everybody else does, just just just to say and tick the boxes, obviously, it's about the training, it's about the personal development. But what for instance, now, any personal development I'm working on with an individual member of staff is going to be specifically bespoke to them. You know, people need support in different areas, people excel in different areas. So it's about, it's about knowing your team, it's about knowing who needs what, where, right, and nine out of ten times, we get it right, you know, there's always that 1% You know, that sometimes doesn't work. But guess what, that doesn't matter. Try something else, do you know what I mean? There's, there's, it's never exhausted, okay, you just keep trying, and you're trying to get to a place or you're trying to get to a state where it's important. I mean, I remember when COVID first started, and it was right at the beginning, where, you know, information was very disjointed and not the short one. You know, I unfortunately lost a couple of members of staff, you know, absolutely fantastic members of staff who, you know, oh, wants to cry when they left. And the only reason why they left was they were just so scared about, you know, contracting anything and bringing it back to their families. You know, we we didn't know what we know now. You know, it was just really that that beginning beginning and and you know, I wish I knew a lot of what I knew now then, you know what I mean? But hey, that's the way it goes. And you know, you can't it's very hard to replace that do you know what I mean? It's very hard to replace somebody who's done 18 years of service it's very hard. You know, it's very hard to replace somebody who's given you 10 years of service. It's hard, doesn't mean Oh, you do and you carry on. But I'm just I'm still saying that that is a wealth of experience and knowledge that, you know, yeah. quite challenging is very hard.

**Wendy Adams 20:23**

How is it different managing a team of staff who are supporting people for a very long time? Is that different? Because I think that brings different challenges.

**Aeon Anderson 20:35**

It is different just No, no, it is different because it brings its own challenges. Like, for instance, you've got to make sure people don't get stale. You've got to make sure people don't get complacent. You've got to make sure do you know what I mean? It's, it's, everything brings with it its own set of Yeah. And that, like I said, and that's down to me, and, you know, and you see the signs very, very quickly, sometimes, you know what I mean? And sometimes that can be so subtle. You know, I mean, I remember having a conversation a couple of years ago with an individual. And I was just like, you know, I called the member of staff and I sat them down, and I said, you know, what's going on with you? And they're like, nothing, nothing, nothing. I'm like, now, now, listen. In the time, you've worked with me, you are meticulous, you don't make mistakes like that. That's, I expect Tom, Dick, Harry, but not you. And it sounds as if it just something that's that simple, is a real sort of immediate indicator that something's wrong. And sometimes it can be something slight. Sometimes, it can be something more deeper. You know, but it's about, you've got to be observant, and you've got to, you know, stay in touch. But now it brings with it its own set of challenges.

**Wendy Adams 21:47**

Because I think there would be some managers sitting listening to this today, who would be thinking, Oh, that that must be an ideal. Yeah, to be able to support somebody for years. And actually, I

experienced that it has its benefits, because you do get to know people really well. Yeah. But you've got to be really careful not to get into that. Oh, we've already tried that. And it didn't work.

**Aeon Anderson 22:11**

And that can be issue. Yeah, that can be an issue. I've also had issues where I've had to change individuals changing people with key working. And, you know, when I change to their key worker, we're gonna have a member of staff not made up. Can I can I have a word? Yes. I'm really angry, that you've, you know, taken blah, blah, blah, away from me. I've worked with them for a long time. Can you tell me why? Yes, I can. Because you go, and I'm like, blah, blah, blah, she daughter or your son? Okay, they're not alright. And can I just say, while you are wonderful, and do a very good job, okay. There are eight people in that one. So there's the whole, you know what I mean, you can go the opposite way. You can go the opposite way. Obviously, you know, that don't mean and it's just that, that relationship that's built on all this, but I can't I need that same passion and love for every single buddy me and not just one individual. So yeah, you most definitely do get huge challenges.

**Pia Rathje-Burton 23:10**

I can imagine, and you talked a little bit about learning and development, obviously, your background is learning and development. So do you use some of those skills, some of the things that you learned?

**Aeon Anderson 23:19**

All the time.

**Pia Rathje-Burton 23:20**

Yeah?

**Aeon Anderson 23:20**

It's embedded in what we do. I'm very pleased actually, because whether I like to do or not, I was given the job as the Training Manager for the organisation anyway, so I sort out all the training, so whether we safeguarding and all the main sort of training, and it's embedded in everything we do, because the thing is, it's not just about going and attending a training day and going through, it's about actually watching it in practice. You know, my favourite sentence is gonna be, is that what you're learnt in safeguarding? Right, okay, convince me remind me, what what happened in relation to that, you know, what I mean? It's, it's testing it, it's revisiting it, it's really looking at it. You've got to be very, very careful, especially when you're doing what we call the five mainers you know, the five main decision that was gonna be safeguarding, health and safety, fire, you know, they're the ones that you have to do, everybody's got to do them, regardless of you know, what department you work in, you have to do them every two years. You're not I mean, and when you've been doing them, you know, every two years for the last 15 years, you kind of can be a little bit, you know, complacent as if you know it, and that's why I'm always, we're always having to make sure we revisit that and test it. Right. Okay. You say, I mean, on the training days, I give them how I always do anyway, and always trying to throw them a few curveballs just to sort of keep them on the toes. But it really is about revisiting that because people can become complacent. You know what I mean? And it's important that they don't, yeah, so yeah, longevity has its challenges



**Pia Rathje-Burton 24:54**

And making sure I suppose making sure that I don't I don't know how you deliver that training is not the same every time because if you've been, there for...

**Aeon Anderson 25:03**

Always different. You gotta keep it fresh, you gotta keep it fresh, you got to bring new dynamics. The thing is, you know, if you are knowledgeable about safeguarding, right, we know, you know, staff would be able to sit here and regurgitate, you know, baby pea curry shot that can give you all the bits and bobs that can you know, laming report that could give you all the kicks that you have to be able to sort of mix it up? So it's like, well, actually, you knew that when did you know this? Yeah, actually, this is more recent, actually, this is that this is not so easy. It's about that, but it's gonna be very challenging.

**Pia Rathje-Burton 25:39**

And this is about sometimes thinking, what is training that it doesn't necessarily need to be a PowerPoint and, and, you know, being able to, you know, quote, something, it can be so many different things, I often reflect on the best, you know, I worked in social care for 20 odd years, and the best bit of fire training I've ever had, and I had a lot, because obviously, it's one of those things you have to do all the time, you know, and I won't, you know, so. But the best bit of fire training I did, was we had somebody come in, I think he was like an ex fireman, and he put on an episode of Fawlty Towers, which was when they had a fire in a hotel, making us watch it. And then when it finished, he said, like, tell me all the things that they did wrong. You know, we had a great fun as a team, you know, we obviously laugh for the episode, you know, and then was able to list all these things that went wrong. And then he was saying, and how would you make sure that it didn't happen your service. And this is probably unknown, 20 years ago that I did that training. And I still remember it to this day, because it was so different. And I think sometimes you just got to guess you say with retraining, particularly with staff will be there again, they're getting and you don't want them to do the same elearning training they've done 10 times because they just don't take it in. They don't use it. Something,

**Aeon Anderson 27:02**

Can I echo your sentiments? I'll give you a joke. I've been teaching for years. So I did my 7307 teaching qualification many, many years ago. And then there came a point where everybody was told regardless of what your whatever qualification you've got, you've got to go and do a PTTLS or DTTLS students like me what absolutely disgusted How dare they we've been teaching for all this time. And they want us to go and do a PTTLS or a DTTLS. They're taking the mick obviously, we had no choice. So we went and done it. So I went off with you know, 30 - 40 other people? We did, it was a residential at the fair craft College in Birmingham for four days, you're actually expecting doing this PTTLS? Oh, my God. Oh, my God, I never learned so much in my life. I've been teaching for years, and just people's ideas and I was like i'm stealing that, I'm stealing that people. Remember, it's all teachers, even people who've been teaching for a long time. But you'd be surprised what people have created or came up with or have done. I learned so much. And actually, it actually really caused me to be a bit disgusted in myself, you know what I mean? Because I thought God, I've joined the pompers crew. I know sounds really silly. But I really learned a lot I absolutely, you know, I took away and a lot of us from that quarter still frames now. I mean, that's about, what, 15 years ago. There's nothing wrong with revisiting things and keeping things fresh, and somebody will always come up with something you haven't thought of or you haven't

done. And it really changed my perspective, especially training wise and teaching wise. And I'm glad they made everybody go back and read requalified No, I'm serious. I'm really, because, you know, I'm telling you straight. I was one of the pompers ones. I really was I was like, please. And they and they intend to teach me what? And tell me I got a shock of my life. And I got a shock of my life. And it's one of those little things every so often you go through life. And your experience starts to humbling, you know, experiences. And that was one of my humbling experiences. So absolutely. I echo your sentiments exactly. You know, you do have to revisit things and look at things and you know, you'd be surprised what people can come up with. You know, I mean, one of the things that staff have always said was, they're always surprised with. You always ask us what we think you always ask what we're addressing, Yeah, because you're on the ground floor. You're doing it. Okay. You know, in our, you'd be surprised what people have come up with. I always tell new staff when they come some of the best interventions and some of the newest interventions we have have come from staff. It's come from ideas that staff have had it's come from suggestion staff about it. And, you know, never hesitate to sort of, say, if you think something can be done better, or suggest another way of doing it or because guess what? It's development. It's continuous. It's absolutely continuous. You know, you know, I remember having a conversation just the other day. And you're well, you all know, but even myself, as a manager, as a trainer, you know, I've got to make sure my PDR is up to date. You know, they want to know, what have I done recently? What it's really not what I've been up to. And it's good. It's very, it's good. This should be challenged. And you know, it shouldn't be questioned, you know, how fresh are you? how up to date are you? Absolutely, do you know what I mean? So everybody's kept on their toes to make sure that the maximum, best service no matter where you are, no matter who you're giving a service to? It's the best. Yeah.

**Wendy Adams 30:53**

So we always have our time to care slot in every episode. What's your most time saving tip?

**Aeon Anderson 31:00**

I think I've got two. And they're going to probably sound really, really basic, and probably really silly, but it's just the truth. My number one tip, organise your office. I know it might sound really silly, and really basic managers like myself, we have a lot of paperwork, a lot of things that we have to catalogue, right. I mean, if I could turn the camera around, I'll show you my bookshelves. I've got everything from for care packages to you know, there's just a lot of paper. Now. My deputy loves me, right? You know, I'm married. I don't mean we're in a relationship or anything. But you know, she does. That's because she can ring me, I can be anywhere at one of the four sites doing anything. And she can say, Amen. Have you got a copy of the thing. And I can say, in my office, third shelf down, walk along, there's a folder named blah, blah, blah, it will be there. And I know that might sound to you. Now can I just say other managers have come to my office in the organisation and gone back and said, right, we're going to do that, only because it really does help. Okay, my days are non stop, I am between four sites I have got up, I might have six issues at one, six, that another six that another in between that I'm trying to sort out training in between that I'm doing supervision in between that. So it's about that organisation, and when you are organised, everything else just seems put in place. That's, that's, that's my number one tip. Okay, the second great second tip. My second tip is every day, do yourself by Things To Do list, right? I'm pretty sure if you're an operations manager, or just it just any manager, right? It's the best practice you can have. You cannot remember everything. Okay, you've got to prioritise your time, right. Some

things are important. Some things are not as important. Some things are less important, but everything still needs to be done. And the best way is to write it down everyday. I've got like that. Also, it allows you to go back and tick off everything I've done, I put across by the things I haven't. I know I need to carry them over to the next day. It's really important. Also, as well. Some of the things that aren't necessarily important to you are important to other people. Did you know what I mean? So don't don't just cross them off as a not important. So for me, it's really it really is about just just just having that timetable. Do you know what I mean? I'm able to sit here with you in this time slot, because I arranged my morning. Okay, everything's slotted in, in our 230 I remember stuff coming for a supervision. At four o'clock. I've got a meeting up. I think it's I just have to be organised. And can I just say as well, and it's more than diary organised. It's about really literally things to do. And it will seriously help you.

**Wendy Adams** 34:29

What a satisfying feeling when you're crossing them off as well. Yes. Excellent. Absolutely.

**Wendy Adams** 34:37

I've got one final question. So I want you to imagine that you're in a lift on the 10th floor going down with a group of registered managers, and before everyone gets down to the bottom, so you've got a relatively short amount of time. What would be your key message to leave them with?

**Aeon Anderson** 34:53

Key message? I think my key message would be always to remember, for the majority of us, we're working in a service delivery organisation. So we're here to offer a service, we're here to offer support, sometimes we can get caught up in our titles and our positions and our whatever. And it just, it's not, it's not healthy. You know, remember, remember why you're here. Remember what it is your job is, because it's also your job to remind the staff of what theirs is, and they're going to follow the leader, they're gonna take their lead from you. So it's very important what you do and how you do what you do. Because the very first thing, anyone will see is you. So it really is, and, you know, I, I have to deal with lots of different organisations, lots of different individuals. And there are days when I just want to take a hammer and hit myself in the head. Because I just think to myself, hold on a minute. Don't we both want the same thing? Don't we both want the best for this person? Aren't we supposed to be working together to get the best result, but that individual is so caught up in who they are and what their title is and what it is they do? It overshadows why they're there. And things like that just drives me crazy. So if that would be mine, it would just be at all times. Remember why you are doing what you're doing and who you're doing it for?

**Pia Rathje-Burton** 36:29

Yeah

**Wendy Adams** 36:30

Excellent.

**Pia Rathje-Burton** 36:31

That's grounding, isn't it? Is that kind of grounding yourself? Remind yourself, what what? Why do I get up in the morning? What's my purpose, isn't it? I think it's a really good message. Thank you so much.

It's been brilliant. We've talked about so many different things has been really, really great. And just lovely to have you on the podcast. And thanks so much for joining us today.

**Aeon Anderson** 36:51

Thank you.

**Wendy Adams** 36:52

Thank you

**Pia Rathje-Burton** 36:53

Bye.

**Wendy Adams** 36:54

Bye.

**Pia Rathje-Burton** 37:03

So great conversation with Aeon there.

**Wendy Adams** 37:06

It was fantastic wasn't it.

**Pia Rathje-Burton** 37:08

Yeah. It was really interesting. When we were asking about you know, what, what's the benefits of having this service that provides very specific support to individuals from a very ethnic backgrounds, specific ethnic background, and his answers around that around, you know, really providing that, and just having a really good understanding of those individuals background and how important it was to them. And how we then recruit staff to match that, you know, very person centred, isn't it? Yeah, absolutely.

**Wendy Adams** 37:42

Yeah, absolutely.

**Pia Rathje-Burton** 37:44

Obviously, we, you know, just in society, we're talking much more about diverse workforce. And obviously, he was talking a lot about how he almost has to reverse he has this workforce from Africa and Caribbean background, and then some stuff we're not and making sure that everybody feels welcome was, you know, seemed to be really important to him. And he talked a lot about that family feel and making sure that he service, you know, everybody felt that they were supported and their well being was really supportive is really interesting. I think with that we got the Skills for Care back quite recently actually released a new resource called confidence with difference. And it kind of supports managers around those maybe difficult conversations they're having and really thinking about embracing that diverse workforce. So the confidence with difference resource, actually a number of films it was four films and title, they're sort kind of freeform, it's long. And then there's some questions that you would show those films to your staff. And then there's the questions about, you know,

individual styles, own practices, and just making sure that that staff feel that they work in a diverse organisation, and they that, that, that everybody within that workforce are supported. And I suppose it's, you know, it's really interesting. And I think it's, it's one of those areas that when we might all feel a bit uncomfortable sometimes thinking I don't, I don't know how to tackle that. So having some resources to help you open up those conversations in a team meeting, or in a training session, I think is really useful, I don't know what you think.

**Wendy Adams** 39:27

Yeah, he just explained it so well, and I really did feel that you've done such a good job of integrating everybody into a cohesive team, which I think regardless of the makeup of the team, you know, that's what you're aiming to. You're aiming to do.

**Pia Rathje-Burton** 39:45

Yeah, exactly. And we're all gonna you know, we all work with lots of different types of people is maybe not just about race is about, you know, everybody's different and trying to find a way of working together to make sure they really feels included is really important.

**Wendy Adams** 40:00

Yeah, yeah, definitely. I was really interested in what he was talking about when he was talking about learning and development and about the importance of checking out with people about whether they can put what they've learned on training programmes into practice. Because I can remember years ago, you know, when working in services and CQC, were only, you know, came in and what they were interested in is checking that people have done a, you know, have done the training. And actually, what's important is not that people have attended a particular training, but actually come they put that into practice, can they relate that to what they do on a day to day basis. And I think he explained that really well. And it made me think about our guide to developing to developing your staff that we've got. And this is a resource that I think, is really popular amongst managers, because it talks about what might be the core and mandatory training. It talks about different ways to develop your staff. So that often, you know that learning and development doesn't need to be by people attending a training course, whether that's elearning, or whether that's face to face, there are lots of different ways that people can, can learn and develop their skills and knowledge. But it also in that resource, talks about how you can evaluate effectiveness. And there's actually an evaluation template, in that resource that managers could use to help people think about, what did I learn? And how did I put that into practice? And that was exactly what Aeon was talking about when he was talking about he is a manager really challenges people to think about making those those connections. And I think if you don't already do that, using that template, and that resource would be a really good starting point.

**Pia Rathje-Burton** 41:53

Yeah, absolutely. Because I think it's so easy just to attend a training course, and you think, Oh, that's a tick, you know, it goes on a matrix and no more thought about it, but actually challenging staff to think about, how are they going to use that training in their everyday work? You know, how is that training going to benefit those people that you're supporting? And that's ultimately, as he said, is as he was ending, you know, that's ultimately why we're all here. You know, we're, we're there to support the people that that need support. And, you know, by doing some training, really it's about quality, your

your want to improve quality. And it's not just that tick box. So really making that training really effective. Yeah, it's a good guide. And I know in the past, I've spoken to managers about particularly that also about what what's that core training? What's the minimum, who actually requires you to do that? How often do you do refresh training? All those things are included as well? Yeah, great, good for a training. So that's it for this episode. Thank you very much for joining for joining us. You can access all the resources that we spoke about today on the Skills for Care website and in our show notes. Hope you enjoyed it. And thanks very much today. Bye.

**Wendy Adams** 43:05

Bye.