

The Linker Service

Case Study: ac.care

September 2025



Jennifer Doody, Linker ac.care

Jenni Doody has been involved with the Linker Service since its piloting. Jenni was selected for the Linker role by an interview panel that included a person with Lived and Living Experience who had been part of the co-design process. With her own lived experience of some of the issues her clients face, Jenni's work is guided by deep compassion and understanding along with a commitment to practical action that changes things for the better.

"As a Linker, I wear a lot of different hats, which I love. In this role I have the ability to think outside the box and truly walk alongside my clients which means we're able to focus on quality of service rather than ticking boxes and meeting KPIs. Just being in that space opens the doors to doing things differently.

Sometimes there are barriers that you don't see until you're walking alongside clients and you're able to go that extra mile and see the wider context of their lives which is something other services aren't able to do.

We're able to look at the barriers and say, 'I'm a Linker and I'm here to help break down those barriers and support you in a way that has maximum impact.' For example, I might be helping them get their business off the ground so they can generate more income. Or it might be just as little as offering them brokerage to help purchase a small item that will help them thrive rather than struggle. It's looking for those gaps all the time, looking for a way forward.

I think it's great that Wyatt did their research by listening to people with Lived and Living Experience to really understand what people want and need so that they could get to the heart of the problem. So many women would never have even bothered to ask a service for support to go and get their hair done or their teeth fixed because they've come from a DV situation. Most services would see that as a cosmetic thing, not understanding the importance of how much that can change things for a person and help them move forward with their life.

So many of the outcomes unfold organically when you go on the journey with the client. Just by having time to support and observe. Sometimes just a little bit of a boost leads to a lot of blossoming!
You can't underestimate the power and the skills of your clients - the people who really want to go forward and advance are amazing.

I've seen that with nearly all of my clients so far, it's figuring out how to take that first major step towards whatever they've identified as their goal. It's about finding the steppingstones and building the foundation to keep moving forward.

It's also exciting to be part of the network and to have that relationship with my colleagues at other organisations and being able to draw on their strengths. For example, we work with the Zahra Foundation, which specialises in DV. That's not a field that I've done a lot of work in, but if I'm struggling with something, being able to reach out to the Zahra Foundation is of great benefit to me because we're not in competition with each other and we can bounce ideas around. We're there to help each other."

Nicki's experience of the Linker Service

"I have been a very successful person all my life, but I've had a rough few years and sometimes when it feels like you've hit the bottom it's hard to ask for help.

I had some health issues that started in 2018 and then my mum got sick in 2019 and I nursed her until she passed away. Then in 2020 I went to the police about a sexual assault, and then my son started having problems with his health and ended up having brain surgery. And of course there was Covid. It was a horrible time.

In 2023 I was planning on opening a cosmetic tattooing business as part of a new 10-year plan. So, I did the training, but I had more health problems and ended up in hospital for four and a half months that year. I was worried about what would happen if I got sick again because I thought I'd probably lose my house because I had to try and keep up with the mortgage payments I'd missed while I was in hospital.

When I met Jenni, my business wasn't set up yet, but she was able to help me get vouchers and that was so helpful because when I left hospital it was really hard to know where you could go to get help. No one has all the answers and it was a big mess. But every time I got a voucher, I can't tell you how much each one of those helped me.

I got involved in the Linker co-design process because I wanted to be able to help other people. I loved that people out there in the real world, women over 50 like me, were involved in designing it. I can't speak highly enough of it.

I was finally able to set up my business in October 2024 and Jenni helped me get a grant to help buy a beauty bed because I can't bend down because of my bad back. It's like teaching a person to fish because this isn't just financial assistance, it's helping me set something up that's going to make me income and help in the long term. Jenni also helped refer me to financial support and other little things for instance at Christmas time, and she put me on to the Food Bank when I needed it.

I've still been struggling a bit financially because I have to pay off all the courses I needed to do, but I'm doing better. My business is going well. When I started doing this, I thought it was just about cosmetic procedures. But I realise now that it has nothing to do with that. My clients come in here nervous, and when they leave, they are bouncing out. It's about self-esteem and confidence. And you know, that's perfect for me, because it's a giving thing.

As well as helping me set up my business, being involved with the Linker Service helped me mentally and emotionally, because I started to feel useful, and I felt like I was doing something that could make a difference for the next person. It made me feel like if somebody else is going through what I went through, they're not going to have the same outcome as I did, because they're going to have a better support system at the end of it. And that makes me happy."

Jo-Ann's experience of the Linker Service

"I'm a single mother who suffers from PTSD, and a bit of anxiety. I was pretty isolated when I first heard about the Linker Service which was while I was doing a resilience program through Haven – that's where I first met Jenni when she came and did a talk.

And that's when I thought, I'll reach out, because I was needing help with certain things. And Jenni's been amazing. Together we travelled along and worked out some goals, because I wasn't really goal focused at that point.

One of my goals was to get my confidence back after all the trauma and start healing. After talking with Jenni, I realised that maybe a bit of horse therapy would help with my anxiety.

I've loved horses all my life, but I'd even lost my confidence being around horses. I suppose they're a bit wary of humans – it takes time to build the trust. That's sort of like me I suppose. You've got to earn their trust. And they don't judge. So, we started looking into equine therapy and I was able to do it, and it was incredible.

Having Jenni alongside for the journey has been phenomenally important because you'll go along for a little bit and then it's like, 'I don't know what to do next. I don't know how to navigate this,' and that's when I talk with Jenni and we bounce it around and she helps me navigate. It's an amazing privilege.

I learned that healing happens in so many different ways. There's lots of different aspects and things to learn. Even things like eating well - I could see how I'd neglected that with myself. I'm not so withdrawn anymore, and I've learned that it's okay to ask for help.

I think the most valuable thing I've got from the Linker Service is having that relationship with Jenni – it's been phenomenal because she helps me access services when I need them. If I don't know, I'll ask Jenni."