

SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL

CABINET MEMBER FOR ADULT SOCIAL CARE

DATE: 9 JULY 2014

LEAD OFFICER: DAVE SARGEANT, INTERIM DIRECTOR, ADULT SOCIAL CARE

SUBJECT: GRANT AWARD - USER LED HUBS IN SURREY



CASE STUDIES FROM EPSOM & REDHILL

Customer A

D's brother N visited the Hub at the beginning of September to ask what we do? Volunteers gave him a brief outline and he then asked if he could bring his brother in on a Saturday, explaining that his brother lives in North London but comes to visit occasionally. N dropped D off at the Hub on Saturday. D explained that he feels life is passing him by and asked for help and information about housing, finding social activities near to where he lives, and courses to help him advance at work. Whilst he was talking with volunteers it became apparent that D also experiences discrimination at work from colleagues, and needs help with parts of the job that he does. Volunteers referred D to Access to Work, as well as finding information about housing associations near to where he lives (with his parents), and information about social clubs connected to Formula 1 and motorcycle racing for disabled people. D also asked for help finding a dating agency for disabled people and left the Hub with an envelope full of information and leaflets. Volunteers also assured D that he could phone or email the Hub for additional help if he needed it. It was obvious watching and listening to D talking to the volunteers that he felt supported and listened to. He grew in confidence and kept asking for more and more information. He was at the Hub for over an hour.

Customer B

A gentleman in his eighties came into the Hub in the first week of it being open. He was asking about computer training and where this might be available. I told him about Age Concern who are shortly to begin running computer drop in courses. He said that he felt that that was not really what he wanted and began to tell me his issue. He said he had been an inventor and had fully protected his work by patents. However, recently his work had been copied and while he knows exactly how to challenge it, he lacks the IT skills to do it. He said that he felt that IT was acting as a barrier to effective communication for him. I spoke to him about Advocacy and explained that an Advocate could help to support him to say what he wants. We referred him to SDPP Advocacy. He was extremely grateful for the support The Hub had given him.

Customer C

A gentleman came into The Hub to ask about finding work. We were able to signpost him to The Job Centre and told him about the Work Choice programme which is available for disabled people. We also gave him information on Access to Work for when he finds work. He also mentioned Benefits and we told him about Get Wise and how they could do a

Benefits Check for him to ensure he was receiving the right benefits. He asked for a referral to be made so that he could access their services

Volunteers

Volunteer A

D is in his sixties. Three years ago, before he had a stroke, he was a consultant accountant to a large City Council, who spoke very highly of him in his volunteer references. Prior to that he had worked for several internationally known companies.

D is determined to return to work as an accountant but recognises that he needs to rebuild some of his key skills. It takes him a little longer to read documents and he finds typing difficult. At the Hub he finds not only the support and understanding he needs but that his experiences and empathy help him connect with customers. D also has a strong work ethic which helps other volunteers focus on their tasks.

Volunteer B

I will always remember my first experience of the Hub when I collected my volunteer pack, trying to appear confident and bright. I really should not have worried; I received a warm welcome which is something I've always tried my best to emulate when I was working there. I'm inclined to try and rescue and sort people's problems out, I learnt it is not my place and that my role was to sign post people and not to advise. This I hopefully have taken on board in my personal life.

The people who walk into the Hub are often in a distress state, their situations vary enormously. This initially I found overwhelming as my confidence was low. I soon realised my anxieties were unnecessary as the Volunteer Development Worker was always there to guide me and help me develop as a volunteer. I got a huge buzz from helping and seeing people return for appointments with various members of staff, knowing that I had in my role made a positive difference.

You are never alone at the Hub, you can never know all the answers even if you're a bit of a perfectionist like me. The experience gained, the friendships and the support I received has given me the confidence to pursue a career in counselling. I've just started a two year course and even though I am feeling anxious as I did when I first start at the Hub I know it will pass and I'll thoroughly enjoy the experience.

My experience was invaluable, it was fun being part of team and it helped me to build my confidence. I cannot recommend it more highly for such a positive experience.

Volunteer C

T has attended the Hub for one to one Training with the Volunteer Development Worker, prior to starting his four week trial as a volunteer. The Work Placement Officer at The Grange where T lives told me what a high he had been on following his training. The Programme Manager at The Grange also told me that T had been extremely positive about his training here.

T has an extremely positive outlook on life and he felt energised that the ethos of The Hub matched this and he can see himself thriving here as he starts his initial 4 week trial period.

Volunteer D

This is the 4th week of my trial period, and I feel I have been quite well involved in the setting up of the Hub. I think we have got a very good amount of information to help disabled people and their carers. I am learning to access this information on the computer. I am looking forward to meeting people who will drop in and use this very worthwhile service.