



Case Studies

Part 2 of the Evaluation for Building Better Opportunities GCGP Community Connections North Programme

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Introduction

Case Studies are the most important part of this evaluation. They showcase the amazing work this programme has undertaken. The types of support that was provided varied enormously which was a great strength of the programme. It varied from very focussed work on benefit advice, work with homeless, young people, self-employment, work with people complex needs, conditions such as learning disabilities and mental health – the variety is endless.

The programme also saw differing outcomes as successes – employment, self-employment, volunteering, to enhancement of lives through development of soft skills, enhanced confidence, less lonely and improvements in mental health and well-being. The ages also varied from young people to people in their 50s.

The evaluation has taken case studies which have been gathered throughout the life of the programme. It has also included case studies from former partners. So, this means that there are case studies pre and post pandemic and some of the challenges of the pandemic are highlighted.

There were many other case studies that could have been used – but this would have led to an extremely large document, so we made some very hard choices on what to include and which case studies to leave out we have tried to give a selection which illustrates the breadth of work that this partnership engaged with. We have limited it to 3 case studies for partners that participated in the programme for the entire length of the programme and one case study for former partners.

Some of the case studies are written by the participants themselves and others are written by advisors, and some have been written up by the evaluator as a result of interviews in earlier evaluations.

Some of the names have been changed or initials used. Some of the participants were happy for their photos and names to be used, where this is the case appropriate permissions have been carried out.

Cross Keys Homes

Cross Keys Homes is a registered housing association. They deliver skills support including, self-confidence, access to services (IT) and home maintenance. They support people in Peterborough and the surrounding area in their own premises and other premises including community venues.

Case Study

Key themes:- Benefit claims, support to keep him in his own home, Housing adaptations and disabled parking and self-employment for an economically inactive participant and support in the pandemic.

I started to work with M due to an exit participant referring him to me to assist with an ESA claim. M had attended a health assessment appointment was the outcome was that his ESA claim stopped and was deemed fit for work. M suffers terrible with social anxiety, suspected Fibromyalgia, pain in joints and aggressive arthritis. M wanted help to appeal this decision.

I supported him by contacting the Welfare benefit officer at Peterborough City Council. Her role is to assist with DWP appeal cases and completes the process on behalf of the claimant. Due to M's anxiety and not being able to be around people or in crowds/queues, I arranged for a private room to be booked to meet the welfare benefit officer for this pre appeal assessment.

M had to contact the doctor for more health and diagnosis evidence. Not only had his ESA money ceased, but his housing benefit also stopped causing him to fall into rent arrears. M was currently claiming personal independent payment at the lower rate, which was still in payment. The Welfare benefit officer kept in touch with M and supported him to apply for emergency ESA, but this was delayed. M had very little income for his rent and daily living costs. After seeing, the welfare benefit officer, this gave M confidence in chasing the emergency ESA payment.

Due to M's limited mobility, I supported him to request a disabled bay to be put outside his home. I wrote to Peterborough City Council. This request if awarded will allow M to have an allocated space in the car park space closest to his home to minimise his pain.

After a few more visits discussing M's skills and future plans, I completed a universal credit online calculation on the assumption M would have to work self-employed. Due to his day-to-day pain being so varied, working from home for himself will be the best outcome if he lost his appeal. Although the welfare benefit officer had a 98% success rates in her appeals, I had to have a plan B for M.

The calculation indicated that he would be better off in work. I started to look for a self-employment set-up course. TCHC offered a 'be your own boss' course but due to his social anxiety being around people, a classroom environment would set M up to fail. M found 2 online courses which would include how to complete a tax return etc. We booked the courses with Reed and M began to study at home.

Weeks passed and M finally got his appeal decision on his appeal. Unfortunately, it was denied and DWP stood by their decision that he was fit for work. By now, M had the confidence to contact the welfare benefit officer and requested a telephone meeting. She advised that a tribunal service appeal was the only step now available to him. I had to speak with M in great lengths to give him his options before he made his decision to go for the tribunal. I informed him that it was a long process but one that would be worth pursuing. I advised it would take about 8 months to get a court date and I explained that it would be in a courtroom with a GP and independent judge.

M agreed to take the case to the tribunal court. The welfare and benefit officer kept in touch by telephone with M and guided him through the forms required to take the case further. M had to attend a number of doctor's appointments to gather further evidence of his illness and disabilities.

I began to chase up Peterborough City Council regarding the disabled parking bay. I was told that the process could take up to 6 months as the space would be assessed and then a surveyor would have to approve this before sending out letters to neighbouring residents. If no objection is received, this will then be passed to the agency to mark out the disabled space.

Due to M's confidence building slowly, he began to chase up the lady in the public parking department himself.

We then looked at his flat and although it is ground floor, it has steps up to the building and due to the limited space in the property, I supported M to apply to be added onto the housing register to request a move. I completed the form with him along with a South Kesteven housing form, as he does have friends that live there. I also completed the disability housing form to explain why he would require a bungalow and a level floor entrance. M was assessed previously to require grab rails in the bath etc to ease any strenuous pain.

Due to his housing arrears which was now in full payment again, although I submitted ID documents and the completed application, Peterborough housing needs required a letter from Cross Keys Homes to give permission to go back on the housing register. I requested a home visit to inspect the property from the neighbourhood manager so that M would be considered to join the housing register. This inspection was completed, and a letter sent to housing needs.

M attended his Tribunal with his partner who is also his full-time carer. After taking into account all his new evidence and diagnosis, the court overturned his ESA claim, and he was awarded the full support group claim. M was so pleased and soon received a back payment for the difference between the ESA support groups to the emergency payment. This payment allowed him to pay off most of his outstanding rent arrears.

Due to being awarded the ESA support group claim again and deemed not fit for work and given his condition has deteriorated since he was awarded standard rate PIP, I asked if he wanted to try and get the enhance rate of mobility for PIP. I did say M would have to seriously think about it, as his claim could be stopped if they felt his health was better.

The welfare benefits adviser did steer M away from going ahead with this as she said it is too risky to lose the claim altogether. I told M that I would go through his original PIP result and make sure that we have clear medical evidence that his health had deteriorated. M was happy that we had enough evidence and I supported him to contact PIP for review.

I told M that the worst-case scenario is that the claim would cease but we would then go to the welfare benefit officer to appeal and take to tribunal if required. M was happy to take this risk and was his own decision.

I completed the new PIP form with him detailing all his challenges and struggles with day to day living. M said to me that "he had completed the last form and had not included anything like I did due to lack of knowledge. I felt more confident about the application."

We requested a home visit by the assessor however this was originally refused. M phoned the PIP helpline and said, "he was very disappointed with their decision to refuse a home visit" and asked how he could appeal this. They advised he would need another letter from the doctor to support the home visit, which M got and sent to PIP.

M's confidence in dealing with this process had really improved and he did not seem to require my support in these situations. Within a week, he received a home visit appointment. I went to support him with this home assessment, and he did really well, although very drained afterwards. He had to wait 6 weeks for the result.

M emailed for an update on the disabled bay. The council had already written to all residents to request any objections to this allocated bay for M. He was told it would be another week. I am pleased to confirm that the disabled bay has now been processed, lines painted and a sign on the lamppost stating disabled bay. This has made a massive difference to M as he no longer has to park far away from his home.

M has enjoyed his online courses and is awaiting his certificates. M emailed to inform me that he has been awarded his enhanced PIP. This is a great outcome for M and me as his support. I can report M's confidence has definitely improved now he is getting the correct award. I know M has started looking into working self employed as a nail technician, so I printed out all the information and details regarding permitted work. Although he has been deemed as having limited capability for work, he can complete permitted work, he just needs to let DWP know once he starts this. M has started to practice these skills on his friends to gain experience for when he starts his new business from home.

M asked me to chase Peterborough City Council housing register, as I supported M to complete a medical application for consideration. The PCC housing register emailed M to refuse his application as he had not been assessed by an occupational therapist. We applied for an assessment over the phone. M then completed some other email replies to arrange a date. I sent M a link to be added to the priority register for his energy provider. I also helped him find the application for a warm winter payment, where he has now received £140 towards his heating costs.

I supported M to write a letter to request a refund of his recent car road tax payment, as now he has the enhanced PIP this makes M entitled to being fully exempted from Car Tax. M was able to visit the post office to register his car as disabled. I had to chase this refund, as the original letter had not been received. I am happy to say this payment was received.

M had his occupational therapist appointment through, and he was confident to have the assessment without my support. This shows how far M has come with being able to deal with his own health needs. The outcome of the assessment was recommendations for many more adaptations in the flat. Although M is still planning a move, these adaptations will make moving around and lifting himself so much easier in the short term.

Since the Covid-19, I have been phoning and texting M to check he is still upbeat and being able to cope under these exceptional circumstances. I have encouraged him to sit outside in his snug, which is M's happy place. I speak or email M every 2 weeks, to ensure he has food, his health is well, and everything is ok with his medication. M tells me, that this support and positive changes in his life, has massively improved his day to day living and emotional wellbeing.

Once the occupational health adaptations have been fully installed, I will be exiting M from the project. M is loving his nail technician role, although he is still only practising with friends. Once this lockdown has ended and things get back to normal, M will be more than ready to take the step to become self-employed. He is now confident enough to contact DWP when this time comes, to advise them that he will be starting permitted work.

Case Study

Key themes: - economically inactive participant, mental health, volunteering and employment.

T is currently unemployed but not registered with DWP. She is married and lives with her husband and teenage daughter. Her husband financially supports her. T worked as a registered nurse with the NHS for over 30 years. In 2014, due to a change in family circumstances, she found herself struggling to cope with the full-time nursing commitments, working shifts and juggling her work/life balance. She decided to leave the NHS and became unemployed.

She cared for a close relative who was in and out of hospital due to illness for a while. Unfortunately, the relative passed away. T found this bereavement very hard and became ill herself, meaning she had to spend time herself in hospital.

After receiving the appropriate treatment and therapy, she felt she wanted to find a volunteer opportunity to give her something to do and less isolated being in the family home all day. In December 2014 she began to volunteer at Peterborough Cathedral on a Wednesday afternoon each week.

This volunteering post has been a positive move for her and has improved her wellbeing. She has enjoyed getting out the house and is less isolated. She has been able to help customers in the Cathedral shop including the many international visitors.

T was referred to the Cross Keys Community Connections after attending a Cross keys Job Club and a course run for digital inclusion. After this event she completed a form to request support with looking for paid employment.

T was enrolled her onto the programme. T feels isolated spending lots of time alone at home. She has recently increased her volunteer hours at the Peterborough Cathedral due to a project running over the summer months up until November 2018.

She wanted a part time paid work so that she can have her independence and felt she is too young to retire and felt she has so much more to give an employer, but had no idea of where to start to look for work as she did not know what jobs would suit her skills. She was volunteering in a shop, she felt draw to retail. The advisor also helped her appreciate the skills she had gained in the NHS although it was acknowledged she didn't want any caring roles in a medical environment.

We then worked on a CV and online job searching. We began to search for all job vacancies and came across a Pharmacy assistant.

It was clear from her experience she would be suitable for the vacancy as she had much experience with prescriptions/medicine. However, T was worried about how she was going to get there and back, and she was a bit nervous about applying. We discussed ways to remove any barriers and how her husband could maybe pick her up as the finish time was in the evening. She applied for the vacancy. T didn't hear anything, and the advisor urged her to call to see if the job had been filled. She said, "they obviously did not want me". The advisor explained to T that it would be great if she phoned the employer to ask them if they had filled the position, although she had not thought of doing this before, she would phone them. Prior to phoning the advisor prompted her to ask for feedback on her application/CV if they had filled the position.

The employer explained to her that they had filled the position with a candidate who already worked in the pharmacy (internally). She was reassured because “at least it wasn’t because they did not want me”. T was pleased she had phoned and would not hesitate to do this again in the future.

After this T began to look for other pharmacy vacancies. She also spotted another vacancy which required the applicant to hand in their CV at the shop. She was now confident enough to do this.

T visited the pharmacy, but they had told her that although they had offered the job to a person, they had not yet accepted this position. T asked if she could leave her CV for future reference. This had shown how confident she was getting.

A few days later T received a phone call from the pharmacy who had taken in her CV, who said as the other person had not accepted the job, would she like to attend an interview. T said she would. She was very nervous as she had not had an interview for a job since 1989. The advisor gave her some tips on how to prepare. She then attended the interview and told the interviewers that she was very nervous, but she felt she had got on OK. She thought she had answered all the questions and talked to them about her NHS experience and how she had worked with medicine, etc within this role. She got the job and is starting shortly.

Case Study

Key Themes: - work with an economically inactive participant and social inclusion and development of soft skills including independence skills.

R was referred to me by an internal department at Cross Keys. He was economically inactive. He was being supported with keeping his flat in a clean and appropriate state.

I visited R to complete the Community Connections enrolment. I asked him if he had always lived in Peterborough and he said no. R explained that he originally came from the Fenland area but was moved to Peterborough 2 years ago. He lived in a hostel until he eventually got his flat.

R has asthma and suffers with depression and anxiety; he is socially isolated and only leaves his flat to see his neighbours in the same block or to collect his medication. R stated that he did not know the area at all due to not going out. He feels really panicky and breathless when he goes outside his home (comfort zone). When he collects his medication, he takes his medication to allow him to cope with this short walk.

I started to ask R what he enjoyed prior to his diagnosis of depression and his anxiety. He told me that he loved growing vegetables. He used to have a patch at his mum’s house before he became ill. The patch was totally organic. He started to educate me on what he used to grow and what soil to use which was best for growth. I could see that this was his passion. I wanted to find this about him, so I could use this to help him try and leave the flat.

I asked him if he would like me to try and find him his own allotment. He said he would love this, and this would give him a reason to leave the flat. He said he would find the allotment a place of calm. I began to research allotments in Peterborough, and I found 1 near to his flat.

Allotments in Peterborough were like gold dust, and I was told that I had no chance of getting one for R so this made me more determined. I emailed Peterborough City council to ask how I would go about getting R on the waiting list. After several emails, I eventually received a reply with a telephone number of the allotment manager.

I made contact with him, and he said he would be happy to meet R and introduce him to his allotment. He said R was welcome to help him with his 3 plots while he was waiting for a plot to become available. He said that due to working full time he would only be at the plots at the weekend. I explained that R would not attend the allotment alone and I could not attend weekends to support him. He said he had some time off the week after the August bank holiday so I could bring R to meet him then.

This was great news and R was very happy about this. R began to realise that there was a reason to leave the flat and he has been given this chance to start to rebuild his life and look forward to the future. R struggled with food shopping due to his anxieties. He would go to the local shop on the way back from the pharmacy and would buy snacks only. He had no cooker and no fridge so this would limit what he could buy. The Cross Keys worker who was helping with the tidying of his flat, has helped him budget and save up for a cooker which she had took him to purchase. I put him in touch with a local charity who would find him a second-hand fridge. Within a few days he had a fridge delivered, which R was very thankful for. The charity also gave him cutlery, plates and other kitchen/cooking utensils. Having these white goods has helped with R's wellbeing as he can keep food fresh and cook simple foods.

As R struggles with leaving the flat, I asked him if he had ever tried online shopping? R informed me that he only had a post office bank account which did not allow any direct debit/internet banking etc. I told R that post office accounts are being phased out and that it was important for him to get a high street bank account. I helped him to gather identification, but we were a bank statement missing. I supported R to phone the post office to request an up-to-date statement. Once this was received, I would take him to the town centre to open a high street account. This would allow me to show R how to food shop on the internet.

R's bank statement came, and I asked him if he was going to be ok going into the town centre, we chose a time that was less busy, although the schools were still on their summer break. R said he would take his medication which will help with his anxieties. I picked R up and we went into Metro bank with all the correct ID. Although he did have a National Insurance card with a photo, this was not accepted. The adviser had to phone through to head office to check on his other ID to see if he had enough to open the account. R had to go outside for a cigarette, but he seemed ok. This decision was taking time so the adviser agreed to partially open it and he would contact R with the outcome of his ID checks.

Although R was a bit fidgety, he was quite calm. I was proud of him as this was a massive step for him. I asked R to let me know once he had heard from the Metro adviser. That afternoon he was given the good news that all ID checks had been approved. We had to go back into the branch to finish off the process. R seemed a bit better the second time in town as the schools' summer break had finished and it was a quieter time. R completed his account opening but had to wait 5 days for his debit card to arrive in the post. R said he had never had a high street bank account and was happy he had more independence.

The same day we phoned DWP ESA to let them know he had changed his bank account and for any further payments would need to be paid into his Metro account. Due to R anxieties from previous trauma and his asthma, I told R I could support him to apply for PIP. He said he tried before, and he was refused. I told him I would support him this time. If accepted for PIP after a face-to-face assessment, this could help him with taxis etc as he is not well enough to use public transport alone due to being afraid, he cannot cope. He is afraid what is going to happen while he is outside the flat. I supported R to phone for an application for PIP.

The next appointment was to meet the allotment manager near to R home. The manager had forgot so I had to phone him, I said I was disappointed he could not meet as R was looking forward to it and it had taken R a lot to leave the flat for this meeting. The manager came to the allotment after 30 minutes. We looked around and the manager stated that he did have a plot that had not been worked for some time. He just had to speak to the person but if he said he would be happy for R to take this on. R was very excited, and they both were talking vegetables and soils etc. R was in his element which was very nice to see. R could not believe he may have his own plot within a week.

Although the plot was close to his home it was still a 30-minute walk which I know was bothering him. I asked R if he had a bicycle would he use one. He said yes. WE began to look for 2nd hand bicycles. We managed to find one for sale for £45. I made contact with the seller and went to look at this. I agreed to purchase the bicycle and claim back from Cross Keys and not the project because it has second-hand it was ESF ineligible spend. The purchase was important as I knew what a big difference this would make to R wellbeing.

I picked up the bicycle and delivered it to R. I told him to make sure he looked after it and to purchase a good lock. 2 weeks later the allotment manager phoned me to say R had not ben to his plot and he wondered why? R said he had no tools to dig the plot and no way of getting to a centre to get one. Although he had his bicycle there was no garden centre nearby. I took him to purchase a fork which is all he could afford. R promised he would go to the plot at the weekend.

R disclosed that he was having a few problems, he had started to volunteer at his local shop to get him back into doing something good, but this has broken down. This had set R back a bit, but I told him to spend more time away from the flat at the allotment plot where I know he finds this a calm place. The volunteering was a huge step and R said that things were all positive so he wanted to show himself he could rebuild his life. R had found the volunteering himself in his local shop across the road. It would appear he was putting in lots of hours and this was too much for him.

The PIP form has arrived, and I supported him to complete this. We have a few more pages to complete and then it can be sent off. There is still a way to go with R, but he has come so far and he now believes he has a future and he can get better with support. He realises his potential and the door that has been opened for him. He is going to get some seeds etc and really work hard at the plot.

We have still got to look at online shopping and attend the face-to-face assessment, but I will request this is done at R flat.

Early Years Alliance

Early Years Alliance are expert partners tackling childcare needs and supporting women families in returning to the labour market. They facilitate arrangements for childcare and education and support women participants to access available funding. They also provide access to vocational accredited qualifications in the children's workforce for interested participants.

Case Study

Key themes: - supporting participants through difficult circumstances, mental health, volunteering and employment and other partner referral.

"I was referred through the Papworth Trust to EYA. When I first saw Mandy, I was very low and suffering with my mental health due to my husband's infidelities and he was still living in the home, and I felt he was turning my children against me.

I hadn't worked since I was a teenager and never had to worry for money as my husband had a very good job. Before the programme nothing seemed to go right. Previously, I had never had to worry about paying bills or money. My life was falling apart around me. Mandy was able to support me in dealing with the bills and money, helping me contact the right people to get ESA and informing utility companies of my change of circumstances. She also helped me by taking me to appointments for my mental health issues and supported me in court when my hearing for the divorce came through. Since then, I have volunteered in a charity shop and a café this helped me gain a routine. I actually made friends!!

I now work part-time in a pre-school helping with lunches and cleaning. I still suffer with issues, but I am so much better. I would recommend this programme to others and I consider myself very lucky to have Mandy to support me. “

Case Study

Key Themes: - Young person, youth offending, volunteering and employment.

J is a young man that has ADHD; he's 18 years old and is a father to one young child that he has regular contact with, and he and his new girlfriend are expecting a child in November this year.

J has recently moved into his own flat and is claiming PIP and universal credit.

J has had a troubled background and although has not served any time in young offenders, by his own admission he's come very close.

The Project worker met J when she went on a joint home visit with the housing officer who had referred him to the Community Connections project. He welcomed them in and offered coffee and was extremely polite and welcoming. J told me that he wants to make the most of his life now and that he was putting the bad things behind him.

After a couple of visits he started talking about what he could see himself doing. He said that he had got qualifications in fitness and sports and had wanted to join the Navy but due to his diagnoses and medication wasn't fit to be accepted into the forces.

J went to a local pupil referral centre in Peterborough and had enjoyed it there, after talking a bit more about children and how things can be difficult for them it was suggested that he could volunteer at the unit. After a few phone calls the unit were more than happy to have J volunteer for 6 weeks.

J has been volunteering at the unit for 2 weeks so far and is loving it. The head is very happy with the way he works and has put him in touch with an agency that they use for bank staff and supply teachers. J has signed up with this agency and they have accepted him onto their books for when his voluntary role has finished

“I'm so happy with how things have worked out since being a participant on the project”

Case study

Key themes: - ESOL Education and training, volunteering, Apprenticeship and work.

MS, originally from Italy where she had gained a degree in Sociology, had endured several jobs since settling here in the UK. Working at various hotels as a receptionist, later going onto work at a school, where she thought her degree would be put to good use. In both cases her limited English was too much of an issue.

To overcome the language barrier, MS began an English language course at her local college. There a tutor referred her to Mandy Bettlestone at the Community Connections project.

When MS first met the advisors at the project, she was very low and had begun to believe that she would never be successful in a career. We were able to support her with applying to and gaining a volunteer position at Discovery pre-school. MS thoroughly enjoyed her time there, bonding well with the staff and children -and parents- who are from many different cultures. There she also attended training for staff including safeguarding and first aid for the pre-school environment.

MS was thrilled when a job became available at Bees in the Hive in Bretton. She was successfully offered a part-time position which worked perfectly with her English Language course, still enabling her to sit her English exam. To make this even better, she was recently offered an apprenticeship with the Early Years Alliance, working at Bees in the Hive.

Since beginning her job and apprenticeship, Mandy met with MS for a catch-up late last year, she is extremely excited for her future and so happy with how things worked out for her since participating in the Community Connections Programme.

FACET

Facet is an accredited training provider with Gateway and delivers qualifications in Enterprise and Employability skills etc, all delivered in practical work-based settings. Training is also delivered in the context of Independent Living and Employability skills to boost confidence and wellbeing. FACET supports participants who live in the Fenland area and have a learning disability, physical disability and/or mental health condition.

Case Study

Key themes: - Self-confidence, independence skills, travelling independently, handling money, work placement and self-employment.

Ben joined the project in October 2017. He wanted to develop his confidence skills, build on work skills and explore the idea of travelling independently. Ben has been very active in a shop-based work placement. (A Facet run shop). He is always keen to take on any task. Cleaning and developing new ideas for ways to improve the storage of stock and tidiness is something Ben works very hard at. He has developed his own systems for cleaning the front of the shop and minimising the amount of dust that collects on the shop floor. He is always full of great ideas and will rise to any day-to-day challenge. He is particularly good at conversing with the customers and is developing relationships with regular customers.

Recently Ben has started to leave the shop without staff support to go to the bank for change or to the local sandwich shop. This is great progress for Ben's independence skills. He is increasing in confidence and more comfortable with crossing roads alone.

Ben has always taken care when using the till and is more confident in selecting the correct notes and coins to give in change and is generally more confident in dealing with money when he is out in the community. Ben has processed a card payment in the shop for the first time and appears much more comfortable in trying new things.

Ben has also had the opportunity to follow a Gateway course in Enterprise. He has explored many of his ideas from creating his own environmentally friendly cleaning product to upcycling furniture. Ben has good IT skills and has continued to develop these with his course work making to order personalised keyrings to raise money for sport relief. Ben's increased confidence with trying new things was also evident when he used his heat gun on his woodwork project with very little support, previously this is something he would have not felt comfortable trying even with support.

Ben has successfully applied for a bus pass. He has planned a simple first journey on the bus which he firstly does with support. He is working towards using the bus independently to travel home from his work placement. Ben is now happy to go to the bank and shops on his own crossing a number of busy roads.

"Doing a work placement was something I had thought about but have never had the opportunity to do before.

I feel much better about the skills I need to continue with a work placement which I would like to be charity shop. I didn't have any previous work experience in shops before I joined the project. I had done a little at school in a recycling centre.

I have been thoroughly supported to get a bus pass and this has enabled me to gain experience of travelling on the bus which has made a great difference to my life."



Case study

Key themes: - Development of independence skills, money management, independent travel, volunteering and education and training

Amy joined the BBO programme in October 2017. She was keen to develop her independence skills particularly around texting, using money and accessing the community.

Amy was already attending Facet before she joined the project. She was receiving other support as she was in supported living with a local care provider.

"I was a bit scared, as I was not good at my money and didn't know if I could buy something I needed. I felt nervous about going out on my own, but community mapping has given me the confidence to do much more alone."

Amy has worked hard on her money skills spending time practising finding certain amounts of money using coins with the money boards. Prior to joining the project Amy used notes all the time to purchase items in the shop or gave her purse to staff to pay for her. Amy can now identify all coins with a good degree of accuracy. She can find the correct coins for frequently used amounts like £1.75. She now chooses to pay for items for herself in the shops and is growing more confident all the time.

Amy struggles with literacy skills but wanted to be able to send text messages to her friends and family without relying on staff to do it for her. She identified the 10 key messages like 'How are you today' she most wanted to send. Amy typed these up using the computer and carefully copying letter by letter. She laminated the paper and cut its message out then attached it to a key ring. Amy uses this to select a message, type into her phone and send her own messages. Amy is growing in confidence and using her keyring less as she learns the messages through repetition.

Amy has been involved in community mapping the local area. She is increasing in confidence around such things as when to cross the road, what to look out for when you are walking down the road and how to find places in the local area. This has also given Amy opportunities to use her money skills with the level of support given gradually decreasing. She now walks to FACET on her own crossing small roads alone. Amy has also just started to go into town alone without staff and walks to her placement at the SCOPE shop. She also confidently travelled back from Whittlesey to March on the bus with another student but without staff support. Amy is now confident using public transport, she can now pay for her own bus and train ticket including telling the driver where she wishes to go without staff support.

Amy has had the opportunity to develop many of her own ideas, creating a range of jewellery, weaving a recycled plastic basket amongst other things. She has developed a positive attitude and is always ready to give things a go. It was her dream to be allowed to use the till with support at the charity shop where she volunteers once a week. She has now been allowed to do this once or twice and is continuing to work on her money skills so this will become something she can do regularly with confidence.

Amy has completed her Entry level 2 Gateway course in Enterprise and decided to start another Gateway entry level course in Catering.

Amy is now gaining 1 hours paid work through cleaning at Tennyson Lodge. Amy is continuing to receive support from FACET and is working towards an entry level qualification in catering.

Case Study

Key themes: - Health conditions, Pandemic, Development of independence and job skills, independent travel, volunteering.

Nathan joined the project as part of our 3rd year intake of participants. Nathan completed his person-centred plan when he started and discussed that he would like to learn more around work orientated skills like CV writing, interview skills, using the internet to job search, gain work experience skills and learn how to use public transport and read timetables. He had been attending the college of West Anglia but felt he had enough of formal education and wanted to try something different.

This was to help him to become more confident and become more independent in the future. Nathan was already attending FACET 2 days a week before he joined the project Nathan was taking part in a wide range of activities through FACET which included cooking and football.

He lives at home with his family and attended FACET with his brother.

Nathan has a complex heart condition, hearing problems and a mild learning difficulty. He finds talking to people he doesn't know or talking on the phone difficult. This makes it hard for him to ask for help when he needs it. Nathan is working on developing his confidence in a work environment, out in the community and socially.

Due to his heart condition Nathan has spent most of the pandemic shielding this has had a significant impact on his mental health especially his confidence. He now feels much less comfortable going out in the world especially alone. He had been gaining independence and confidence with small trips out alone, but this has regressed since the pandemic. Initially Nathan was very work focused and hoped to be able to work part time in retail. He was doing extremely well with this, growing in confidence with dealing with customers and basic retail tasks. Over the pandemic being remotely supported his focus has shifted to independent living skills and back towards education. He is not comfortable with the idea of returning to a big college environment but is seeking to improving his English, maths and independent living skills at FACET's small hub in the town centre where he has less contact with large groups of people.

Nathan had asked to receive support around a range of employability skills which he received but he also took part in so much more during his time on the project. Nathan was supported to apply and gain a bus pass which he used as part of his travel training to and from March to Whittlesey as part of his work experience in the FACET shop. He also used timetables to plan a trip to Peterborough to research how other shops operate and incorporated skills like geographical knowledge, time keeping and using the community.

Gaining work experience was a big confidence boost for Nathan as he learnt so much at his time in the shop. Skills included handling money, using the till and correcting any mistakes he made, using the card machine. taking the takings to the bank, customer service, sorting the stock, cleaning and making sure everything was displayed correctly. Over time Nathan became confident to go to the bank and travel from home to the shop independently. It was hoped the experience he gained here would serve as a steppingstone to applying for part time employment when he exits the project but the pandemic has put a hold on this for the foreseeable future. Nathan enjoyed using the computer to research work he was doing and completed a number of projects around art, film, music, English comprehension and practical maths work. Nathan researched what it would involve living independently and completed his C.V.

Nathan enjoyed taking part in practical skills workshops which included art, horticulture and woodwork.

Nathan researched different styles of art and artists and decided on which styles he liked best and designed and created original artwork which he was then supported to mount and frame. He helped to exhibit his and other participants artwork in a group exhibition in town.

Nathan was also a founding member of the group who helped to design and make a bespoke wooden mosaic table for the sensory garden at FACET. He helped to cut wooden blocks, paint them, fix them into place and to see the job through to the end. He also helped to design a 4- piece fence made from decking board offcuts which he also helped to paint. The project was commissioned by FACET management and helped to support a better understanding of using recycled materials to make something bespoke for the garden.

Nathan is working on his independent living skills and hopes to move into a flat with minimal support. In the long term he would like to look at part time retail work but does not feel this would be safe for him at this stage of the pandemic.

Nathan is also continuing to attend FACET within a town setting and will be starting a qualification around independent living which will tie in with work he has done within the project.

Nathan feels learning art skills has helped him find a way to relax. Travel training is something Nathan feels he has gained a lot from. Working in the shop has given him confidence around money skills, displaying stock and talking. Talking to customers has really helped with building confidence in talking with unfamiliar people. The small groups and more personal way of working made it easier for Nathan to find his voice in a group setting. Nathan enjoyed the feeling of teamwork and banter. Nathan feels the project has done him a lot of good and has helped a lot more than he thought it could.



The Ferry Project

The Ferry Project aims to support a large number of homeless people per year, and it supports homeless participants on this project. Throughout the programme they worked with a wide group of participants not just homeless, unemployed people from the local community doing a lot of work with the job centre.

Case Study

Key themes: - Homelessness, mental health, help with benefits, volunteering, money management, re-uniting with family, Education and training, inter-partnership working.

The Participant joined the project in July 2018. Sarah's goal was to get support with her mental health, gain confidence and receive training as she been unemployed for 27 years. Sarah's children are also in care and due to losing her mobile, she could not contact them which she found overwhelming.

Before Sarah joined the Ferry project, she was living on the streets until she was referred to the night shelter. She had no confidence, no trust in people and could not openly talk to staff and ask for help. She had issues with benefits and did not have housing benefits in place. She was very scared and frightened which made her a "closed book". During her time on the programme, at the beginning she did not engage so well due to the above factors. However, overtime Sarah become more confident and gratefully accepted the help and support she was being given. Sarah was also supported with contacting Social Services to arrange seeing her children in the contact centre.

As Sarah had no ID, no housing benefits in place, she was supported to obtain a birth certificate and helped with benefits. This then allowed her to move in the hostel at the Ferry Project. This provided Sarah with more stability and further support. To build Sarah's confidence and trust, she was offered a volunteering opportunity in the Ferry Project kitchen. This had a positive impact on her mental health. It helped her confidence with meeting new people, engage with staff more while in a safe environment. This also enabled her to gain more trust and become more open.

Sarah attended a budgeting course which helped her to stabilise her rent repayments. She does still have hiccups with her rent, but she is supported a lot with this and was supplied with a calendar print outs to help prompt her. Sarah has been supported with a professionals meeting to set up contact to see her children. She attended a contact session in April 2019. As this meeting went very well, she has been given an appointment for another session May 2019. Sarah is very relieved to be able to see her children as she misses them greatly.

Sarah has also engaged in a number of activities in the hostel which boosts her confidence and has a positive impact on her mental health. Sarah exited the programme upon attending a Class2Cloud level 1 Social Media course. This involved learning about different social media platforms, search engines such as Google and the reason we us them. Sarah continues to see our on-site councillor regularly, which gives her time to discuss past/present worries.

"In the future due to the support I have had, I would like to be a councillor to give something back and to help people who have had the same experiences as me. I was provided with an information document by my BBO support worker, so I am aware of the qualifications I need and the further steps I need to achieve my goal. I did originally want to be a veterinary nurse, however with the great support I have received, I want to be a councillor.

The support and training I have received is very good. It has helped me to grow as a person and help overcome the barriers I had at the beginning when I first joined the Ferry Project. I have more motivation to move forward with my life in a positive way and I have things to look forward to.!

Case Study

Key themes:- Mental health, homelessness, financial difficulties, voluntary work, increased social skills

Peter's story

"My relationship broke down, which ended up with me self-harming and overdosing. After a domestic row, my partner asked me to leave and called the Police and I spent a day in a police cell. I then started sleeping in my car and doing a bit of agency work when I could. Eventually I got some help from the Richmond Fellowship, CAB and Ferry and the doctors.

There was a case conference, and I was prescribed anti-depressants.

I now have my own flat in a sheltered housing block with other people who have mental health problems or who have financial difficulties like me. Prior to this I was living in the hostel for 3 months and doing chores they asked me to do. I did voluntary work and art, photography and film, retail, IT and a SIA courses. I had a key worker who looked after me.

I did not know who to turn to, but the Ferry project showed an interest in me. It put my faith back in human nature.

My confidence has improved – initially when I went to the Ferry Project, I was very quiet and introverted. Now I am very talkative – of course the medication has helped me. I have no anxiety now.

I have a much wider circle of friends and I feel confident enough to speak to people.

It doesn't take much in life to get into a place like the Ferry project and could happen to anyone".

Case Study

Key themes: Young person – care leaver, barriers caused by disabilities, lack of employment history, lack of rural transport, development of independence skills, employment and difficulties caused by the pandemic.

TB joined the programme in July 2019.

His aims at the beginning of the programme were:

To gain employment

Gain skills based around interview skills.

Re-create his CV.

Learn to drive.

To gain own accommodation as he is currently a lodger in his foster parents' home.

TB is a leaver of care. He had a PA at the beginning of the programme; however, this support came to an end shortly after signing up to the programme.

TB has disabilities, limited basic skills and lives in a very rural area with limited transport. The bus that came to TB's village was limited and had to be pre-booked.

TB had not held a job before, therefore needed support with his CV, Interview skills and job searching. He wanted a job based around the qualifications he gained at college and the experience he has gained through volunteering in Film and media. TB was also very interested in social media and marketing. However, due to the rural area and lack of transport, he was unsure if he would ever get a job role in this area.

At the beginning of the programme, TB's identified barriers were:

- Leaver of care
- Mental health
- Physical health issues / disabilities
- No previous (Paid) work experience
- Out of date CV
- Interview skills
- Unsure of future

TB lives in, in very rural with a bus that requires to be pre-booked. This made it difficult to attend courses and limited the areas we could look at for employment.

Cambridgeshire Skills ran a "Confidence for life and work" course which involves building confidence, identifying skills and talents, improved CV's, job applications and touched upon interview skills. I discussed this with TB, and he was interested in attending. This was run at the March Community Centre which was closer to TB. However, due to the transport issue with the bus, he would not be able to get to the course at the start time of 9.30am. Therefore, I discussed the barriers with the course provider and very kindly, they offered flexibility, allowing TB to start the course between 10/10.30am (Dependent on the bus arrival time). TB was able to attend the course and catch up on work at home to allow him to complete the course!

Due to transport issues, TB wanted to learn to drive. Due to his disabilities, he had to complete a driving assessment first. He attended and passed his assessment which allows him to begin to learn. TB found that driving a car would be too expensive, therefore he opted for a moped as this is cheaper. I got him in touch with Kickstart, however TB decided to independently seek a CBT test centre near him. TB began to take lessons. Unfortunately, the river near to the test centre flooded and the centre had to temporarily close. Therefore, this had to be put on hold.

In the meantime, I supported with TB in re-creating his CV, an Indeed account and applied for a volunteering role based around his interested in social media and marketing and an employment opportunity for leavers of care, Civil Service Care leaver internship. Unfortunately, TB was not successful.

To help TB gain more experience for his CV, I referred him to Clarion Futures and training. They offer free online courses which was beneficial for TB due to transport. They set TB up for a first aid and Data handling course.

As TB wanted to gain a moped independently, to support him with funds for safety equipment/clothing, I requested a grant from the Elizabeth Wright charity. A grant of £200 was approved! TB was very pleased with this. As the CBT test centre had reopened again, TB booked his test in. However, Covid-19 struck and placed another barrier in his way. The test centre had to close as per Government Guidelines and TB had to self-isolated as he lives with other vulnerable people and a very vulnerable younger child who had received an NHS letter. TB notified me he had to self-isolate until mid-July. Although everything was on hold, I continued to carry out phone call support sessions with TB. He was no longer interested in completing online courses and couldn't wait for the lockdown to be over.

To give TB a positive uplift, together, I helped him search for the safety equipment/clothing he needed for a moped. He chose the equipment on Amazon, and I got these delivered directly to his house. Although he was still unable to take his CBT test, he now had the equipment ready for when it is re-booked.

Then one day out of the blue, TB's luck changed. He was contacted by Banya Fostering, who is the fostering agency who placed him with his current foster parents. They offered him a home-based job opportunity in social media and market which involved creating/editing videos, content on social media, promotion of the company etc. This was an amazing opportunity for TB as this is his area of interest and due to transport barrier, home based was very ideal as it breaks down those barriers. TB started the role almost immediately, attending training sessions over Zoom and edited his first video for Banya which they were very impressed with.

TB requested a video call to support him with completing his induction paperwork (Employment application, personal statement DBS etc). We conducted a 2-hour video call to complete the paperwork which he then sent off. Therefore, TB has successfully been exited in to Employment, in a job role he really wanted!

B plans to eventually gain his own accommodation as he is currently a lodger in his foster parent's house.

Once TB's shielding period has ended, he will re-book in his final CBT test. Once passed, TB will buy himself a moped. This means he will become more independent and freer to travel whenever and wherever he wants!

Hanseatic Union

Hanseatic Union provide IAG, ESOL, and employability skills which will support participants to access local services and enter employment. They primarily support recent migrants and refugees, and people with language barriers in the area of Kings Lynn, but also support local people in the area too.

Case Study

Key themes:- Disability and illness, Benefits advice, potential eviction and effects on the family – finding employment.

Client R attended a drop-in session asking for advice on employment in September 2018. R has been in England for 12 years. Has worked full time as a self-employed builder, has a mortgage for 11 years, a child in primary school and a wife.

He had experienced some health problems in the summer that had meant he was unable to work in a physical job. He had undergone some tests at Addenbrookes and had been diagnosed with a brain tumour, lymes disease alongside pain in his joints that was severe. The brain tumour gave him migraines that put him in bed for at least three days a week.

The terror of all that was happening to him was overwhelming. He had always worked and made his own way and he felt very vulnerable. Much of the support we gave him was emotional, telling him that this was a bad patch and would resolve itself.

When he approached us, he was about to be evicted from his house making him and his family homeless. He had never claimed any benefits and didn't understand the system or even know he could get help so was trying to find work that he could do around his illnesses.

We explained about the benefits system and applied for PIP and ESA. He wasn't eligible for housing money as it was his own property, but we advised talking to the bank about a mortgage break. The process of applying for these benefits took approximately 12 weeks. During this time, he relied on food banks and the goodwill of the bank in giving him a mortgage break. We spoke to the council explaining about the council tax and they put this on hold rather than take legal action. We spoke to utilities and made the same arrangements of waiting for benefits.

The PIP was awarded just after Christmas 2018 (our team supplied presents for the child and food to allow them to celebrate). His wife then received carer's allowance. ESA was awarded and free prescriptions.

This allowed the family to keep their house. Some stability was restored, and the family's well-being improved. His wife approached us for advice to find employment. His wife now works full time, and he looks after the child and the house. R is still on the project as he is determined to find some work that suits him, so we still offer him support.

Case Study

Key themes: - Access to local health services, Development of Independence skills, Less isolated.

A case study from 2018.

John (not his real name) is 19 years old. Prior to being on the programme he had not had any contact with services, and he had not been in school since he was 12. He undertook some volunteering work - 2 hours a week for 6 months, but eventually found it too stressful. He is autistic.

"My autism made the process of getting a job impossible and getting benefits to support me was difficult. I found everything confusing and didn't know what to say. Have difficulty in comprehending what to say and do in certain situations.

The programme helped me get my benefits and some volunteering work, also helped me back in touch with mental health people. I was recommended a walk-in mental health clinic. I then went on to get therapy and I have been prescribed medication.

I have learnt to be more independent – I now do my own shopping. I am also going to move into my own place. Hanseatic Union have helped with the benefits to make this possible.

I used to be very anxious to go outside and I can now walk to the shops.

I am getting benefits and I feel less isolated."

Headway

Headway Cambridgeshire provides specialist support for people with a range of physical, cognitive and social disabilities. They also provide specialist IAG and 1:1 support to help participants re-integrate in the community and to achieve their personal goals.

Case Study

Key themes: - Independence skills, rehabilitation, supported environment, improved health and social interaction.

Marie's Story (not her real name)

The accident and aftermath

"I had been to B&Q and bought some bags of gravel for the garden. In transporting the gravel from the boot of the car to a wheelbarrow I had an accident and a metal bar slammed into my head and hit on the left side front of my head. The force was severe and knocked me into the boot of the car and I can't remember very much. I was more embarrassed than anything else and got back on with what I was doing and laughed it off, but during the next week or so dramatic changes took place. I had memory loss, severe headaches and was paranoid, disorientated and could not find words as well as that I had bad mood swings and big arguments with my sister who I was living with. I also threatened to quit my job, which was very unusual and had a car accident, as I couldn't see the car in front of me. My sister said things weren't right and people at work said things weren't right either and I went to hospital a week after. The hospital told me to take it easy but over the next couple of weeks things got really bad.

I lost all my communication skills and I just stayed in bed and I didn't know where I was. Kept going to the doctor and kept putting me on different medications and had various scans, but I kept deteriorating more and more and living with constant migraines.

Introduction to Headway Cambridgeshire

My sister arranged for me to go to Headway Cambridgeshire and she also bullied me to go and I met Sharon. Sharon suggested I went on course as I hadn't been out of the house for 18 months. I couldn't tolerate noise and lights. Couldn't process things if too many people were talking to me at the same time, this limits where you go and if you have an injury people can't see it's difficult.

The first day I was crying, and my sister managed to get me in the car. As soon as I arrived I met another participant who also had a brain injury. This changed my life after talking to him I was so grateful that I went, as I realised that there was someone in the same position as me. He also had post concussion syndrome. Nice to talk to somebody and we bonded at the very start of the course. It was a remarkable experience and each week life became easier for me. More people joined the group who had brain injuries.

The work we did on fatigue and tiredness and outlook completely changed my life and I started to develop strategies to cope, which I still use today. The course we were given a folder and I still use it.

The medical profession will tell you to sleep whenever you feel like it, but I don't agree with this as with a brain injury you are constantly tired, and you don't develop a routine to cope and get the most out of life. I also learnt about relaxation and well-being. Setting a routine has been invaluable to me. I have developed a mixed routine, but I have very regimented days. Have physical, mental and craft times in little chunks and as prior to this I would get fixated with things but forget to do things. Have an alarm that helps me, so I know when to stop and start things and this helps me to get the best out of life.

Work

On the course we covered problem solving elements, which I would have used in my work life. Before the accident I was a project manager, managing multi-million-pound projects.

I found this very upsetting, and I realised how far away I was from going back to work. I know I won't get back to my job. I still persevere and set challenges for myself which helps the damaged the logical and analytical side of brain.

No way I have the mental capacity to run £10million projects that I used to run. I can't run my own finances. I never know from hour to hour how I will feel. However, I do want a job and to find the right role.

At the moment, I am going through a rocky phase with medication, and I don't feel this is the right time to start as I want to be reliable and don't feel that I can at the moment. Need to resolve these issues before I can be in a position to think about this. However, I do want to be in a position when I can think about it. Perhaps I can do some work for my family and look at other opportunities that are flexible.

What has happened since the course?

I have support from a worker at Headway Cambridgeshire for a year and we have set a lot of long-term goals. We have looked at independence and confidence. On Tuesdays I leave the house on my own and go to a club which I found on myself. We play scrabble, cards and bingo and these help me. It was a challenge finding somewhere in the community I could go on my own. I can handle money and pay for things – like the bus fare. Generally, my sister takes care of finances as I am not capable of looking after larger sums. The whole process was a big thing for me. That has been down to the course and has made me independent and led to me able to find other courses in the communities and I go to craft courses too.

Physically leaving the house has made a real difference to me. It would be easy to ask my family to take me to places, but I need to develop independence.

Health

*I put on 10 Stone after the accident. I got fixated on food. **I have lost 6 stone as I have routine and I now know when to eat.** I also now do physical exercise and I am not fixated on food as I have a strict, but varied routine.*

Social

I am less dependent on my sister now. As a result of the course, I keep in regular contact with 2 people from the course 3 of us text each other and meet up and do things together. I have a much wider circle of acquaintances and there are more people in my life now.

The Importance of the Project

The course came at a very important time for me. It has enabled me to develop friendships with people in a similar situation to me. It has got me out of the house and has given me confidence and using my communications skills.

It has helped me and my sister and given invaluable support. Funding like this has made a great difference to my journey. 99% of my recovery are down to Headway Cambridgeshire and the people who worked for them. They have been brilliant. “

Case Study

Key Themes:- Rehabilitation and support, Finding Work

I had a major car crash and was in an induced coma for a month in August 2012 he didn't respond but luckily his breathing began to kick in. He attended a rehabilitation centre in Ely where he was for 2 months where he learnt new strategies to cope with life with a brain injury. "It was difficult as I realised, I was different as a result of the accident."

He went back to work in 2013. Luckily, he had an insurance policy which paid out while he was sick. He was a senior software engineer. He started part-time and worked his way back to full-time. He felt that after he came back, he wasn't wanted. He worked there for about a year and at the end they both came to agreement that he should leave. He got a package and left.

He went to another intensive course through another centre that he was referred to by the NHS – a lot of people there were just interested in the benefits. This lasted 3 months for 4 days a week and I learnt a lot. "

"I found the course that Headway was running through an advert on Facebook. I tried it out and it was just what I wanted as I was with people that wanted to work. It wasn't just about getting benefits. Headway didn't have pressure I learnt a lot through both the training and the stories other people had. I met people who were very similar to me, and it was nice talking to people similar experiences to me. There was no real pressure on me. We had a common goal that we all wanted work. It was very relaxed and calm. It was charity based and they wanted me to succeed. OT was very good. OT isn't there anymore as there is no funding. When I went back to work, I was supported by her and it's a shame that she has left.

I took 2 months to find work in a company as the lowest level where I went in as an Automation Test Engineer which involved writing software for test control systems and I have subsequently worked my way up. Main thing I got from Headway was how I dealt with my injury. Prior to going back to employment, I arranged a meeting in which I discussed what limitations I now have. For example, I can't multi-task very well. Prior to Headway would have kept my injury to myself. It made me realise that it was best to talk to employers and this worked well for me. It was a big thing for me to do.

Group discussions at Headway helped with this. This was the biggest change I made. I acknowledged the fact I can't multi-task. I was honest and open with my boss. I am still with the company after 2.5 years I enjoy working here wished I had worked here before. My priorities have changed 37 before the accident it was all about making money and status. Now it is about enjoying work. Headway – let me acknowledge my injury and the biggest thing was having an OT. Having a point of contact and someone to talk to. They supported me after Headway and my return to work, if I had any worries, I phoned them, and they would talk to me. They saw things much more clearly. After speaking to them I felt more relaxed, and things looked different. I still miss my calls to her. I split from my wife about 8 months ago and it would be good to speak to someone about this. I met my wife at university and it's a big life event living by myself.

Without Headway I wouldn't have this job and by able to be open and honest with my employer. "

Kickstart

Kickstart is a Charity who offer an alternative mode of transport, training and safety equipment, to individuals who rurally isolated or need to access work training or education across the GCGP area.

Case Study

Key themes:- Ex-offender, homelessness, poor rural transport, Finding and keeping employment

Peter was in a very bad place before he got the help from Kickstart. He had been in prison after being found guilty of 12 charges including fighting and resisting arrest after about 2 years of crime and homelessness. He had made use of foodbanks and hostels. He had a part-time job in a chip shop. He hated prison being locked in a cell for 23 hours. He came out of prison with only the clothes he stood up in and a pair of shoes. He had no job and no money and there were many times he thought being in prison was preferable as least he had food and a bed.

His parents and probation officer gave him support and he found a job with Lidl in March. However, he lived in Peterborough, which is only 11 miles away, but the public transport is poor and Lidl were expecting Peter to do shifts – shifts being 6.am. – 4 p.m. and 12.30 – 10.p.m. Public transport was not an option.

Subsequently he has referred to Kickstart for a loan of a bike after 2.5 years he still is using it and he has passed his test. He is now considering buying his own bike.

He uses his bike to get to work which is essential in order that he can keep his job. He does a variety of tasks doing everything around the store, baking, tills, stock control etc. He is now a very experienced retail worker. He works hard often doing a 50-hour week and earns good money. He now lives with his parents and together they have put a deposit on a house and are moving to their own house. He is now buying furniture through the money he is earning. Kickstart has helped him get a stable job, economic independent and he has means of transport. He life has been turned around for the better through the programme.

Case study

Key themes:- Rural transport and finding employment.

2018 Case study

David (not his real name) first heard about Kickstart Norfolk through his work coach at the Job Centre, who also briefly told him about the Project.

David was previously signing on with Kings Lynn Job Centre and he was in receipt of Universal Credits around about £230 a month. He wanted to hire a moped from Kickstart Norfolk and the funding, from the project because he was on a low income and was unable to afford the full moped hire costs as he had other outgoings to pay as well. With the use of a Kickstart moped, this would enable him to look further afield for employment and not just within the Kings Lynn area that he lives, he would be able to be more independent and travel around to hand out CVs, complete daily living tasks and move forward with his life. David has previously been a fork lift driver, has worked within the warehouse industry and doing line work as well.

David has stated that having the use of a Kickstart moped has enabled him to move forward massively with his life and he has had 12 weeks of project funding which has paid for moped hire of a 50cc Honda Vision, paid for David to complete the CBT through Motorider CBT and also to be issued with a Motorcycle helmet, jacket with armour, a pair of gloves, a set of waterproof trousers and a hi-visibility vest. This has all helped him more than he could imagine.

David has grown in confidence in himself by having the use of a Kickstart moped as he has been able to get out more, apply for jobs and has managed to find himself employment which he is over the moon about. He is a Loader and Bin man.

David has been able to hand out CVs to all different companies around the Kings Lynn area and further afield. It enabled him to attend job interviews and has found full-time employment as a result. Within his employment he is completing his CSCS card in the near future which will open up more job opportunities for him.



Kickstart and Facet

Case Study

Key themes:- Rural transport, education and training, finding employment, inter-partnership working

Beth has some learning disabilities and is in her 20s, having never worked.

“My mum moved to Cornwall to live with dad and didn’t know anyone and I lost my confidence. I met a worker from Facet through my brother – I didn’t know what her day job was. Got into Facet and enjoyed and made friends from going there. I had been at College and had some qualifications computers levels 1 & 2 and animal care and horse care level 1. When I went to Facet I hadn’t got a job and I was on benefits.

The programme helped particularly with maths – I said I couldn’t do it but they helped improve on my maths and my confidence and started applying for jobs. I managed to get work as a colleague festive at Tesco – working during the Christmas period. This was very successful, but it was only for a short time. I then managed to get an interview with Morrisons at St Ives and then I got a letter offering me a job and I am still there. I work 15 hours, but I do want to go full-time.

I often get overtime which brings my money up. At the moment they have a job vacancy in the petrol station which is full-time, and I want to apply for that.

I have learnt to be more independent – I gained so much confidence at Facet and I also managed to get a moped from Kickstart. Prior to getting the moped my dad used to drive me to work. I used to pay him £35.00 a week for petrol. It now costs me about £20.00 a month for fuel.

The course gave me so much confidence I couldn't have done it without them. The job too, I have to talk to customers and that has also helped me. I now have friends at Facet and work.

I used to get very angry with my family and take my frustrations out on them – I don't do that anymore.

I am off benefits I was getting £65 per week in benefits plus carers allowance for my dad."

"Before (the course) people told me that they thought I would be on benefits for the rest of my life – I have proved them wrong."



TCHC

TCHC are not only the lead partner, but they also delivered education and training for the programme.

Case Study

Key themes: - Young people, Education and training, Integration into life in the UK and Increased social networks

Ganiyu and Daniel are two brothers who are 17 and 18. They first heard about the project through their youth support worker when they first came to the UK.

We had arrived in the UK from Nigeria in December 2018. We wanted to get into education but because the colleges all have enrolment in September, we were too late and faced being out of education until September 2019. We had already been out of education in Nigeria for 2 years and felt that we could not afford to waste so much time. We had no qualifications and no chance of getting any unless we were able to find somewhere to study.

The situation of having no place to study was extremely worrying and quite depressing. Our whole family of 8 was in temporary accommodation, only having 2 rooms for us all. Spending the whole day in this environment was not good for us and we needed to learn. We have great ambition; a nurse and an Orthopaedic surgeon are our main goals. We knew how far behind we were already compared to people who have lived in the UK all their lives, so we needed a college.

This programme has given us the opportunity to gain the qualifications that we need to gain a place in college. We would never have been able to access the courses that we have without studying at TCHC. Not just this though, we learned so much about safeguarding, prevent and British Values. These are things that we knew nothing about prior to starting at TCHC. We made friends, we learned how life in the UK is, we were encouraged and helped to join a gym. We were made to feel like we belonged.

We both gained the following qualifications:

Maths Functional skills level 1 and 2, English level 1 and 2, Customer service level 1, employability skills level 1, IT user skills level 1.

We have both gained a place at Peterborough Regional College studying for GCSE's in applied science, IT and maths and English. This will enable us to apply for university.

The support we received was invaluable. We were given every opportunity, every encouragement and most of all we felt safe and valued. We were treated so well from day one, we were supported fully every step of the way and we will always be grateful.

Case Study

Practical skills for Business

Practical Skills for Business consists of six days of delivery. Looking at what is needed to set up a business, and Mindset and Marketing. It uses lots of practical exercises. After the course, 12 hours of mentoring experience is offered.

Key themes: - Self-employment, integration into life in the UK and networking

I heard about the programme whilst looking for work. Prior to joining the programme, I had lived in Harare, Zimbabwe for 57 years. I am a British citizen and came to live in the UK in June 2017. I began looking for work immediately, but what I was being offered was either too far from where I was living, wasn't paying enough for me to provide for my family, or I simply didn't get a response to my applications. I have many years of mechanical experience, as well as starting, owning and running a successful business for 20 years. I am a qualified Aircraft engineer and have diplomas in leadership, retail and church administration.

I wanted to join the programme, as I knew I had the experience, intellectual capacity and skills to be employable. I realised that to meet my goals, I would need to start my own business.

Prior to joining the programme, I was frustrated and felt dejected, even though I had all the necessary qualifications, physical ability and skills necessary to find work. I was pursuing job possibilities every day, have gone to job centres and was following up online applications, but wasn't finding work. In addition to this – as previously mentioned – the wage being offered was too low to sustain my family's needs, or the jobs were more than an hour from where I lived.

The programme was tremendously helpful, as I was able to get the necessary information and training to equip me to get started in a new country and assisted me with information and training to find the correct industry to work in. In addition, it enabled me to network with other entrepreneurs and as we discussed and brainstormed various ideas and concepts, their perspective help hone my vision and goals.

There were team building activities, as well as daily interactions on projects with other team members. These were always invaluable as I received many different perspectives and together a solution was found.

I have always been positive about working and I am now self-employed doing House and Home repairs. The work includes gardening projects, painting, everyday maintenance on home appliances as well as basic building and DIY projects. In the future I am entering into a partnership with another businessman, which involves buying homes that require repair. We aim to purchase 6 a year and carry out the necessary work and refurbishment on them, to bring them up to a high standard and then put them back on the market and turn a profit.

The support on the programme was excellent – beginning with the person running the programme. And the team members on the course were a great support. After completing the programme, I have been having weekly sessions with the tutor who has been mentoring me as I move forward and build my company. I have found these sessions invaluable and insightful and have grown in confidence and knowledge. I would certainly recommend the course.

Case Study

Key themes:- Education and training,

John

I heard about the project through my support worker.
I failed one of my exams and I wanted to get more qualifications before going to college.
I had to do employability skills, and this helped me know about employment.

I have gained employability Level 1 and have gained confidence and I now have a job. I work in a bar/club in Peterborough. I serve customers.

Tutors were very supportive, and I would recommend TCHC.

Former Partners

Keystone

Provided soft and functional skills development support for young people who are at risk of becoming NEET. Additionally, they run schoolwork clubs, ESOL and work opportunities through their enterprises.

Key Themes: - Young person, mental health, development of soft skills – confidence, independence skills etc. finding employment and education and training

L is a 16-year-old girl, who had attended secondary school. She had missed some of her exams due to non-attendance. L spent her days in her bedroom, often sleeping for up to 18hrs. She could not envision any sort of future, due to non-attendance, anxiety and confidence in herself to gain any goals.

Then she met an advisor from Keystone and was introduced to the Empowerment Programme. However, it took a while with lots of guidance to get L to meet up to discuss the BBO Empowerment Programme.

The first meeting was with L and her mother, due to anxiety about meeting new people. L was keen to build her confidence up and wanted to get in to further education and a possible Part-Time job. After initial trust issues L started on The Empowerment Programme. L is interested in working in the care sector when she leaves education, we went through the different options within the sectors, and she wanted to work with children.

On the third occasion of meeting, L came on her own, with her mother nearby, which in itself was a very large step towards her independence. Keystone worked through the worksheets to see what her transferable skills were. She was a keen artist and enjoyed drawing. (She even drew a picture of a Chihuahua at one of the meetings).

As further trust was gained, L opened up more about her anxieties. The advisor worked on her travel arrangements so she would be able to use transport for 6th form, making weekly To-Do lists and worked on her personal profile, CV, transport and confidence to attend 6th form.

With help she applied for a part time job in the local fish and chip shop. She had a trial and the advisor from Keystone met with her beforehand to talk her through what was expected of her. She got the job.....

L was unable to attend taster days at 6th form due to anxiety so instead the advisor at Keystone discussed and planned her route for enrolment day. Her Mother went with her. At the beginning of September, she had her first day at 6th form. And she loved it.

Papworth Trust

Papworth Trust provided peer support, work experience, independent living skills, employability skills, job search skills and basic skills support to people with learning disabilities, mental health conditions and Autistic Spectrum Disorders

Case Study

Key themes: - learning disability, development of confidence, work placement, finding employment.

"I was on a course a work choice course that Papworth were running, and I heard about the programme. I had been volunteering in a charity shop and had worked in retail (mostly voluntary/work placement). I had been unemployed for a while, and I wanted to find "paid employment".

I was frustrated because I am keen and reliable. I give 100% but because I have a learning disability, I feel that employers didn't really understand what makes me tick.

The programme has helped me because I think I have more confidence now because the staff at Papworth have all been helpful. They listened to me and organised for me to go on a work placement at B&M, a retail shop.

I think what helped was that I redid my CV to make it more marketable I also came into Papworth to do some supported job search. I also completed 12-week work placement at B&M.

I started at B&M full-time on the 14th August 2018 having completed my 12-week placement. It had given me the opportunity to show what I could do. I felt that I was given the chance to take things at my own pace. I feel the project understood my ASD. They really listened to me. The things I asked for in my action plan had happened. I got a job.

The Princes Trust

The Princes Trust provided end-to-end support for young people, including those who are NEET and/or pre-NEET. Support consisted of basic skills training, employability skills training, sector specific training and work experience.

Case Study

Key themes: - Sector specific training and work experience and improved health

"It has really built my confidence. I can now talk to customers and feel more confident about it. I feel I am now ready to get a job.

Before the course I was scared to going out to places I am not familiar with, and I can now cope with this. I can now do things independently and I need less and less guidance from the staff – I have gained a good deal of experience in visual merchandising, window display, home and women's wear and ironing!

I enjoyed the CV and employability day that has been run.

My health has really improved. I was on Sertraline 50Mg a day for depression and anxiety. I have now stopped taking these. I had been attending a counselling. I have now stopped my medication and I have stopped the counselling. I have made friends in the store and people on the course with me. I don't fall out with my mum so much and I am generally a lot calmer. I have been so well supported and have had many good comments about my work."

The Rosmini Centre

Rosmini delivered ESOL to migrant communities as well as IAG and support to establish local networks and access local services to reduce social exclusion. They also provided Level 1, 2 and 3 training in a variety of sectors in 40 different areas which was dependent on the needs of the individual.

Case Study

Key themes: - Homelessness, ESOL, Education and training and finding employment

“I was referred to the BBO project from the Staff at the Centre as I was using their facilities, as I was homeless and unemployed. I had been referred to the Rosmini centre by March Police as my husband and were homeless and unemployed as we were sleeping in a car. We had been strawberry picking in Spain for 10 years but from Bulgaria originally.

We had paid a lot of money in Bulgaria to an employment agency for a vacancy in Wisbech which came with housing. However, there was no jobs and no accommodation.

The Esol classes were very important as was the advice for housing, rent and about local agencies that could help us, it helped us to understand the law and advice from where we stayed. We got national insurance numbers and some qualifications including a Food Hygiene Certificate Level 2. We both now have jobs in a factory, and we are renting our own home. “

Sharing Parenting

Sharing Parenting is a community interest company who primarily worked with parents and carers who are not working. They provided a range of courses for parents including Raising Toddlers, Raising Children, Raising Teenagers, Assertiveness, Building Resilience and True Colours.

Case Study

Key themes: - Improved parenting and education and training

“I found about the course that Sharing Parenting were running through someone who had already done the course.

I have always wanted to do the best at whatever I do and since I chose to be a mum, I also want to do my best at this. I feel taking the course will give me the tools that I need to feel good about my parenting.

I loved the course. All of it, I found useful but my understanding of my children’s behaviour and the best way in which to approach how they are feeling and how to deal with my own emotions.

The course has made a huge difference to me in how I feel about my parenting. I don’t beat myself anymore for not being how others expect me to be but have confidence that the way I will bring up my children will be a happy one. “