

Project: Opportunity Shops – Seacroft	
Lead organisation: GIPSIL	Wellbeing Funding: £13,000
<p>Opportunity Shops' have been running twice weekly at the Denis Healey Centre in Seacroft since June 2014. The morning sessions are traditional work clubs, offering internet access, support with job search, applications and CV writing. Afternoon sessions and other activities offer attendees access to other opportunities such as volunteering, work experience, training and sports.</p> <p>Numbers of people accessing the service, by age, gender, post code, ethnic origin and disability</p> <p>63 people have accessed our service in Seacroft up until the end of December 2014. 14.49% of participants have moved off of Job Seekers Allowance. Our service has reached 43 men and 20 women. The youngest person we have worked with is 16 and the oldest is 64. Attendees came from the following postcodes: 58 from LS14 and 5 from LS15.</p> <p>59 of the 63 people we have worked with described themselves as of White British background; the other 4 people described their ethnicity as: 1 White Irish, 1 Asian other, 1 Caribbean & White mixed background, and 1 'other ethnic group'.</p> <p>Volunteering opportunities</p> <p>17 people have moved into voluntary work up to 31/12/14 in order to gain experience and quality references for their CVs, including those accessing placements established within GIPSIL and Elevate. Volunteer roles developed and established include Reception, Admin and Housing Support offering relevant work experience for those who may lack necessary skills to move into their desired employment. We are continuing to develop volunteering through collaboration with other agencies, including Fareshare. With this in mind, we have fostered new links with a range of local organisations to offer a wider variety of volunteer roles, including the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Canals and Rivers trust – offering lock keeping roles and admin roles in their LS9 based head office. • Action for Gipton Elderly (AGE) – offering support roles in Gipton. • Hyde Park Source – offering roles in gardening and horticulture • St Richards Church group – This group is in the early stages of developing a community café and creating volunteer roles to staff and eventually fully manage and lead the café initiative. <p>Which activities and/or mini projects have been established?</p> <p>Cooking Group - We have linked with Space 2 to provide basic cooking classes for a small group, learning how to cook economically and healthily to achieve a balanced diet. This provision continues to develop transferable skills in cookery within a social group reducing isolation and enhancing confidence.</p> <p>Arts & Crafts Group - We have linked with Skippto to offer an arts & crafts group to develop confidence and creativity skills.</p> <p>Gipton the Musical - This is a drama/theatre arts project organised by Space 2. We have referred those people who have expressed an interest in the arts but had little or no previous involvement with drama groups. We have facilitated and supported participation by staff attendance at meetings and rehearsals. There has been minimal drop out and we believe the project is helping participants gain confidence and build self-esteem.</p>	

Hyde Park Source - We are developing our links with Hyde Park Source in Killingbeck and supporting their initiative growing fruit and vegetables in a community allotment.

Details of promotion/ partnership working, attendance at events/ meetings and other promotional activities

- We have hosted several 'Get IT Together' courses, developing basic IT Skills and digital inclusion
- We are liaising with AGE UK to continue to provide basic IT skills following the ending of the 'Get IT together' project and as a result of our identifying a need for support with IT for the over 55's.
- Several First Aid courses - including emergency aid and first aid at work - have taken place to increase employability
- A Safeguarding Children course (Level 1) was delivered by Wayne Dixon and 5 people qualified for the award
- Working with Joanne Buck, we have facilitated/referred to an employability class delivered by YMCA at the Denis Healey Centre
- Linked people into Space 2's Men's Group, which runs from the Denis Healey Centre. The group supports single men to gain confidence/develop social skills, before being referred back to the Opportunity Shops once they are more ready for employment.
- We have continued to attend and promote at community network meetings and work club meetings.
- We have attended agency networking events at various venues, including East Leeds Academy.
- Continued to signpost people to other agencies providing specialist support/training, e.g LS14 Trust; St Vincent's and St Anne's.

What individual outcomes were achieved and what was their impact?

Both needs and outcomes varied from person to person. A large proportion of the people attending required help to create a Curriculum Vitae (CV) or to edit their existing CV. Many of the people attending have little or no experience of work, no references and low educational attainment, making this a difficult task for them to do alone.

Three case studies:

Tom

Tom has become more confident over the time we have worked with him. Tom volunteered with GIPSIL's social enterprise, Elevate, renovating and maintaining properties – initially once a week moving on to two days each week. Tom sees volunteering in a positive light: he values the experience he has gained and feels part of a team. It has provided him with more structure in his day to day life. Tom has made a massive contribution whilst volunteering.

Jillian

Jillian has also increased her confidence and built her self-esteem. She has developed new skills and attended training courses we have offered such as an IT course and First Aid at work, both of which have helped Jillian become more work ready through working as part of a team and meeting new people. Jillian has also been very successful in getting interviews with employers, and ultimately gained employment as a cleaner at the First Direct Arena.

Josh

After being referred through his housing support worker, Josh first engaged to write a CV and create a Universal Jobmatch account. He engaged early on and we discussed a potential volunteer role in building maintenance as Josh had completed several building qualification whilst in custody and he was keen to pursue a career in joinery. Josh started his volunteer placement on a full time basis and, at first, he engaged well and arrived on time, developing a good working relationship with his

colleagues. Due to some personal issues Josh failed to continue with his placement and he became difficult to make contact with for a number of weeks. We finally re-established contact and we negotiated with his volunteer placement to allow Josh to return. Josh returned to his placement and after a few weeks we updated his CV and circulated it to several vacancies. Josh gained an interview for a labourer role and was subsequently offered the post.

What needs/ issues are coming up and how can we resolve these?

One issue identified was young people appearing reluctant to attend the Opportunity Shop on a regular basis when older people made up the majority of participants. We asked a couple of younger people why this was and were told they 'felt uncomfortable'. Our approach was to develop the Thursday session into a more young people focussed session that doesn't exclude older people but targets more younger people to attend preventing feelings of isolation and discomfiture.

15 attendees are in receipt of ESA and are not job ready. However, we are supporting them to develop their CV's and look at potential volunteer roles to enable them to move forward into employment when their health allows.

Alcohol - A few attendees have alcohol dependencies, but are not seeking support with this and feel ready for work. A link with DISC has been secured for those willing to be referred.

Literacy - Some people are in need of support around basic literacy. Difficulties with spelling, grammar and writing skills are barriers for these people.

IT Skills/ Access - Older people attending – particularly those who are over 50 - often struggle to work via the internet and many have never used computers before at all. Job Centres have recently moved to more online systems and we are starting to see an increase in people seeking help with using computers. Many people don't have IT or internet access at home, which may also put pressure on community IT resources in the coming months.

CVs and Work Programmes - Some people do have CVs when they first attend, but these are almost always hard copies which can't be edited. The CVs may have been created when individuals have previously attended work programmes, but the electronic files were not made available to them for future editing.

Difficult Job Seeker agreements - These seem to be less of an issue than they were last year. The 'claimant commitment' is now in force and most people seem willing to discuss any problems with their Job Centre personal advisors or coaches.

Universal Jobmatch - High rates of inaccurate information: It seems many details (such as phone numbers) for jobs on this site are incorrect or the job has simply gone and not been removed.

Outcomes	How many
Completed registration / initial assessment	63
Moved closer to employment	63
Created CV	47
Occasional attendance at Opportunity Shop (2-3 visits)	27
Regular attendance at Opportunity Shops	36
Occasional job applications	27
Regular job applications	36

	Gained interview for employment, training or education	41	
	Involved in Opportunity Shop activities / projects	12	
	Occasional volunteering	8	
	Regular volunteering, work experience or work placement.	9	
	Entered training or education (including Youth Contract)	6	
	Gained temporary part-time employment without training	3	
	Gained temporary full-time employment without training	1	
	Gained permanent full-time employment without training	2	
	Became self-employed	2	