

baselines

**british association for
supported employment**



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Welcome

Welcome to Baselines.

We've seen some welcome developments over recent weeks and BASE welcomes the proposed extension of Access to Work to cover work experience support for young people. It's critical that we do more to encourage progression to paid work for young people as they leave education and we hope that developments through the SEN pathfinders in England will show a way forward for better collaboration between education, social care and employment services. 14 colleges have been named as pilots for a new supported internship programme but the timescales are extremely challenging as they are due to start this September. This appears to give little time to plan effectively with host employers and we hope that the colleges will work closely with their local supported employment specialists. If there's a pilot near you then contact them urgently to discuss partnership opportunities.

Work Choice guidance has been amended and Module 1 can now last a total of 12 months. This is welcome news and we hope it will result in better access for people with substantial disabilities. Also welcome is the introduction of employer incentives for young people going through the programme. These were two of the recommendations from the provider meeting jointly organised by BASE and ERSA. Another recommendation was a relaxation in minimum levels of engagement. DWP has now relaxed this rule for the first 4 weeks on programme, a rather baffling decision, and one unlikely to make much difference in the scheme of things.

Members will be aware that BASE has consistently opposed the use of supply chain contracting for specialist support but we are where we are. The fact is that people with substantial disabilities are, by and large, not getting on to Work Choice. The recent publication of programme data shows that a large majority of Work Choice referrals are for people who are claiming Jobseekers Allowance and only a small minority are on incapacity benefits. This is extremely concerning, as is the apparent lack of data on the disability of those being referred.

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Welcome to Baselines: continued.

Work Choice was launched with a set of key success criteria that included a greater focus on those who need specialist support and provision for all types of disability. It is clear that anecdotal evidence, together with the limited available programme information, suggests that this is not happening. We continue to try to engage with the Minister for Disabled People on this critical issue of how best to support disabled people furthest from the labour market into employment but we've never experienced a Minister for Disabled People with such little interest in engagement with us.

Scotland has shown the way in using Article 19 to support public procurement and it's high time that Westminster followed this lead. The recent ministerial announcement that 9 Remploy sites may still have some sort of future still leaves 27 now confirmed for closure and funding is available for voluntary sector organisations who are in a position to support affected employees. We've added a section to our website about procurement from supported businesses and the directory now lists details of products and companies across Britain.

We're still waiting for approval of the new National Occupational Standards for supported employment and have now developed a comprehensive 5 day training course for practitioners. This has already been delivered in two locations and we've been very pleased by the feedback. We've also been very busy recently with consultancy support for a range of local authorities.

Summer sees us preparing for our annual conference in Glasgow in September. It looks like being an excellent event again and we hope to see many of you there. It's a good opportunity for learning and networking, both for experienced staff and those new to the sector. Full details are on our website.

I hope you enjoy the newsletter. Please continue to send us articles and features for future editions.

Best wishes,

Huw

Funding opportunities

Funding for further education clusters

Funding of £4000 is available to providers who successfully bid to become part of new further education clusters in England. The Department of Education has agreed to fund Phase 2 of LSIS's work around the government green paper Support and aspiration: A new approach to SEN and disability.

Clusters will be expected to focus on the following areas 'Preparation for Adulthood' and 'Challenging Low Expectations' through sharing delivery and effective practice. They should also undertake developmental work around areas such as co-delivery, phased transition and developing supported employment and social enterprise models.

New fund to support work with Remploy employees

The Government has announced details of a Community Support Fund to support those individuals affected by Remploy closures. Financial assistance is available to not for profit organisations across Great Britain to make a positive difference to the lives of the disabled individuals and families affected by Remploy factory closures.

The fund has a value of £1,500,000. There is no minimum or maximum amount that can be applied for. However, larger applications may be required to provide more detailed information about outcomes and value for money.

[Full details are available on our website news pages.](#)

Practitioner Awards 2012

BASE is inviting nominations for its 2012 Practitioner Awards. The awards will be presented at our conference dinner on 12 September and nominations are sought before the end of July.

The awards are an excellent opportunity to recognise excellence within your staff teams. We've tried to make the nomination process simpler this year so we hope you'll want to nominate a colleague for one of the awards.

For the first time, we are trialling a team award and, for this year, it is only open to Scottish services.

- Outstanding Practice Award: Support for people with learning disabilities
- Outstanding Practice Award: Support for people with mental health needs
- Outstanding Practice Award: Support for employers
- Outstanding Team Award for Scottish Services



You'll find details of the awards and a nomination pack at <http://base-uk.org/awards>

BASE Conference 2012

12-13 September 2012, Thistle Hotel, Glasgow G2 3HN

This year's BASE conference takes place in the heart of Glasgow and is sponsored by the Rehab Group.

Speakers for the event include:

- Alex Neil MSP (Cabinet Secretary for Infrastructure & Capital Investment in the Scottish Government)
- Anne McGuire MP (Shadow Minister for Disabled People)
- Alan Cave (Delivery Director, DWP)
- Marie Kelly (Director of Training and Employment Services, Rehab Group)
- Roy O'Shaughnessy (Chief Executive Officer, Careers Development Group)

A full programme of workshops will be provided as usual. The full programme is available at <http://base-uk.org/conference>

We are able to offer the option of booking delegate places together with two nights accommodation. Contact us for details.

Feedback from last year's conference:

"One of the most useful conferences I have attended. Thanks!"

"A brilliant two day conference. Thank you."



<http://base-uk.org/conference>



Pluss wins Exeter Employer of the Year

The Exeter Employer of the Year award was presented to Pluss, a social enterprise which supports thousands of disabled people into employment each year in a variety of ways. Over 110 companies were entered for the prestigious award.

One of the routes through which the organisation does this is developing local micro-social enterprises such as Future Clean, an eco-friendly car wash system launched in Exeter in 2011.

It has so far supported more than 10 people in the city with a wide range of disabilities into work, including ex-servicemen, people with a learning disability, autism and Asperger's, mental health issues and sensory and physical disabilities. For many, it is the first step back into employment and a more independent lifestyle.



Future Clean has proved so successful that it is now being rolled out around the country, including in Plymouth, Brighton, Sunderland and Oxford and already supports more than 50 people across the UK. There are also plans to take the model to France.

Judging panel member Andrew Blair, managing director of South West Media Group, said:

“ This company is a very imaginative company and they are working in a challenging area. They are trying to provide employment opportunities for people with disabilities and they are doing an extremely good job of it. ”

“ They have a new product called Future Clean, which looks to be similar to the Big Issue product for homeless people. They are doing a very similar thing for people with

disabilities and that looks set to be a very healthy opportunity for the employment market over the years ahead. ”

Exeter-based Pluss is the largest social firm in the UK. Its long-term objective is to make Future Clean as recognisable for supporting disabled people into employment as the Big Issue is to the homeless community.

The system uses half a litre of conditioned rainwater to wash three cars, with no water or debris reaching the ground. All cleaning products are biodegradable and the simple, portable system can easily be carried with one hand, making it accessible for people with all types of complex disabilities.

Future Clean intends to recruit for 12 six-month traineeships in Exeter and a further 12 in Plymouth over the course of this year.

Pluss also came in as runner up after being nominated for the Plymouth Employer of the Year Award.

www.pluss.org.uk



Employers are the key to our success in supported employment.

By Christina Earl, Team Manager, EmployAbility.

For those of us working in local authorities it can be easier to work with outside organisations than our own HR teams. Here at Surrey County Council in the past we have struggled to convince managers to provide work experience and then found our own policies and procedures, that are there to provide fair, equal chances to all, meant it was almost impossible to get disabled people into roles.



Nithya at Quadrant Court 1



Job Profile Information//

Facilities / Caretaking Assistant

Most days you will//

- Tidy training rooms,
- Tidy the desks and chairs in the training rooms,
- Make sure the rooms have a flip chart pads, pens, water cups and other resources that are needed.

The issues are often around lack of experience or ability to engage with the recruitment process. Particularly in this time of cut backs, how do we get people into jobs using our place, train and support model?

This story goes back around 4 years, with only a handful of people with learning disabilities employed in a very large county council. As you know employment support officers never give up, despite being told it was impossible to change the processes, we found a chink of light. A new Head of HR (Carmel Millar) wanted to meet with us and most importantly wanted to make it happen.

After much discussion around working interviews, job carving, work experience etc we were given some hours to play with (a luxury that would not be possible now). It was just a few hours but when we divided it into some 4 hour roles it gave us a chance to go to some managers to get the ball rolling and start to get our message across. The roles were specifically designed to be suited to people with learning disabilities and autism. Our priority was those people with higher need, who were or would have been in local authority day service provision. This was to showcase what could be achieved and we promoted the success heavily across the county.

Continued...



From these small beginnings we have an HR contact working with a member of the supported employment team to identify opportunities and promote to managers the idea of job carving and using those few hours left in their budget to provide a useful source of support for their teams. Along with HR we created easy read job descriptions, easy read application forms, easy read policies and the ability for managers to have working interviews.

The jobs were advertised for a minimum time on the internal website and then more widely at day services and to our existing clients. Over the next two years we filled 50 vacancies – all paid, the majority part time, but some full time vacancies. As part of our award ceremony we made a DVD to show some of our new staff and gave awards to some of the team who were making such a difference to the people involved, but who also gained some fantastic, inspirational colleagues.

Although this project has now ended, we continue to have the support of many of Surrey's managers and place people across the organisation and within Surrey's schools and commercial services.

Last year we had a new initiative this was aimed at people with secondary mental health conditions. We partnered with mental health service providers Richmond Fellowship and ESRA and identified candidates who would benefit from work experience at Surrey County Council.

We also engaged with Manpower, our sole provider of temporary staff for the county, to support the project and encourage those who were interested in applying for paid work as agency staff – this suited those who did not want the commitment of a permanent role until they could see how they coped with going back to work. Over a 9 month period, 22 work experience placements were sourced and filled averaging six week slots tailored to the needs of the individual. The project finished earlier this year and currently 6 people have obtained paid work at Surrey and one has gone on to start a Surrey apprenticeship.

The client feedback was excellent and showed the commitment from the staff and managers.

These are some of the quotes from candidates:

"The work I did was rewarding and I never felt judged as a "nobody" or pity case"

"I wanted to feel that I was making a difference and to build my confidence. It was also important to me to update my skills"

"It was essential for me to return to an office environment where the rights of individuals were taken seriously and without any form of prejudice"

"I have regained my confidence and have a job!"

This project evaluation has now gained us an additional year's funding where we are extending the mental health project to include people on the autistic spectrum and ex-offenders. The funding is for a co-ordinator from our team who makes it happen. One of our new projects is to increase the number of disabled apprentices at Surrey – we have made reasonable adjustments to enable some to work part time or to get help with their entry requirements, but more work is in progress.

In conclusion, no employer is perfect, but we are proud to be part of a council who have allowed us to push the boundaries to give opportunities to those who otherwise never get a chance. Of course, we also know these employees are less likely to need to use the services of adult social care in the future as their independence and skills just grow and grow...

Will personal budgets mean more job outcomes for disabled people?

Paul Wilson (Vice Chair, BASE)

I know of one supported employment Chief Executive who resorted to putting up, as the last slide of any presentation he made, a photograph of a polar bear balancing perilously on a narrow ice floe. The bear's dilemma was clear enough. Climate change was shrinking its habitat. Would this perfectly evolved creature be wiped out by environmental circumstances wholly beyond its control?

The message about supported employment was not dissimilar. Like the bear, the Chief Exec was saying, supported employment was a creature perfectly adapted to the job it was designed for, but the pressure on local authority spending was starting to seem like a real threat to its future.

These days, disinvestment in public services is an infinitely bigger issue than it was back then. But now there is an additional challenge to the future of supported employment, with the gradual replacement of local authorities' role as strategic commissioners of social care services by the promised consumer choice of personal budgets.

'Personalisation' was the Government's response to the idea that disabled people shouldn't simply be passive recipients of care. Service users should be able to decide for themselves what services they need. And quite right, too. But in a political environment which has increasingly championed the sanctity of the marketplace, personal budgets (through which people would take control of their own social care monies through Direct Payments) seems to have become the best and only way to translate this personalised approach into practice.

If we have learned nothing else over the last four years it is that unregulated markets don't always achieve the optimum outcomes for either individuals or for communities. As a consequence, I think we need to exercise at least a little caution about where the personal budgets agenda may ultimately lead us, not least because balancing social care monies to meet individual needs, even in a time of plenty (which has now long gone), was always going to be more complex than choosing a breakfast cereal or switching a gas supplier.



And there is an irony here for supported employment which is this: whilst many parts of the social care system desperately needed the game-changer that was personal budgets to drag them away from treating service users as makeweights in the business of managing occupancy levels for in-house services, supported employment has, for a generation, been the most personalised of social care services, from its vocational profiling and the 'Place & Train' philosophy that drives its day to day practice to the Systematic Instruction used to job coach people in the workplace. It cannot help but put the service user in the driving seat.

In fact, my contention is that commissioners, providers and service users collectively face three big challenges if they are to ensure that the new consumerist approach to social care doesn't, in the end, result in fewer people with disabilities getting and keeping paid work.

Continued on next page...

Personal Budgets: continued.

The first challenge is around pricing. Supported employment is a process, not an outcome, and an uncertain one at that. So, for starters, people will need to know if they are paying for the process (i.e. the efforts of the provider to find the right job) or the outcome (a paid job). Providers must also work out how to charge for their services. Commissioners prefer a simple hourly rate, both because this approach fits with the maths of personal budgets but also because this approach serves to drive everything into the same 'basic rate' pen. This is a key battleground for the sector which needs its work recognising as a creative and entrepreneurial profession which should be priced accordingly. The nightmare scenario for providers would be to see them forcibly re-modelled in ten years' time on private sector care agencies staffed by people prepared to tolerate zero hour contracts and entry level pay scales with an hourly payment system that incentives failure because 'success' (i.e. a job start) will end (or reduce) the weekly payment stream.

The challenge of 'what' you are buying doesn't end there. The supported employment process consists of several distinct phases, some more labour intensive than others, much of it taking place out of sight of the service user. The greater or more complex someone's support needs, the more difficult it is to predict the journey to paid work. Commissioners setting personal budgets (and service users wanting to plan how to secure a range of social care outcomes within their finite and inevitably restricted budget) may want the kind of simple pricing structure which makes the short term costs of supported employment look high but may underestimate the longer term savings (both to the state and to the individual's person budget) that a settled and rewarding job can bring.

Outcome payments clearly make more sense, but critically these require commissioners to pay now and save later, and they don't fit neatly into the columns of a Personal Budget. And in setting their prices, especially where commissioners are reluctant to regulate the local marketplace, providers may potentially need to compete with next-door-neighbour amateurs and hungry private sector care agencies who will inevitably offer to 'do it for less' at the precise moment when newly agreed Occupational Standards for the profession offer the promise of consistency of delivery across the UK.

The second set of challenges are around marketing. Providers will need to decide what their USP will be. Will they seek to win over customers on price? On quality? On how fast they will get someone a job? On how many bureaucratic corners they can cut on risk assessment and

health and safety? Should there be pricing differentials based on a calculation of the challenge of placing and maintaining specific individuals in work, like those used in the delivery of DWP's Work Programme? If so, how will providers square the need to advertise prices up front before customers commit their money with the need to calculate a differential price in a meaningful way? And how will providers explain those differentiated prices in a sensitive way to people whose value to prospective employers they must claim they have the capacity to sell?

One last thought about marketing is this: how sure are we in an Age of Austerity that people will risk choosing supported employment over the more secure prospect of an hour's bowling or a couple of weekly trips to the gym when every pound in a personal budget matters?

Thirdly, there are the delivery challenges. Direct Payments exist as part of a retail model in which the purchaser controls what to spend. Supported employment is built on a place and train model in which the provider delivers just enough support at each stage of a challenging process to ensure the service user's needs are being met based on a series of calculations made against risk, independence, learning and progression. A contract between provider and service user may need to address what happens if a service user (or their family) wants more (or less) support than the agency is providing at that stage of the journey. Should an individual be able to pay for a level of job coaching in a factory that the provider believes is insufficient to ensure their safety? Will commissioners really want 20, 30, 50 different job coaches in their district all repeatedly knocking on the door of increasingly weary local employers in an unregulated free-for-all marketplace?

Finally, how will providers adapt to losing their necessary economies of scale in a marketplace governed by multiple individual person budget holders. It's interesting that the approach currently being approved around the country for many Extra Care Housing projects administered by the likes of Housing 21 is the bulk-buying by local authority commissioners of several hundred hours of care per week or month from a single agency. It's an opt-out rather than opt-in scheme, with the advantage of a more stable and professionalised care team meeting individuals' daily needs. You can argue that it's back-door block contracting, but it achieves what the recent DEMOS report on personal budgets argued for – personalised service as something potentially distinct from the individualised purchasing of Direct Payments.

Continued on next page...

Personal Budgets: continued.

So where does that leave us?

We know that supported employment is an evidence-based approach, that it is cost-effective in long run, and that the Department of Health, the ODI and DWP think it represents best practice as a model to help people with disabilities find and keep the right job. We know it has also been the most personalised of social care services over the last 25 years, putting the service user at the heart of the process.

We know it works, but we also know that our profession will not easily translate into being a purchasable commodity within a retail marketplace. As well as this, we know that there are an increasing number of voices, including DEMOS, the Chair of Shaping Our Lives (Peter Beresford), the pioneer of personal budgets and former director of In Control

(Simon Duffy), and the founding member of the UK disabled people's movement (Mike Oliver) who are beginning to raise concerns that an unregulated marketplace driven by an army of individual Direct Payment purchasers may not, in the end, be the best way of meeting everybody's social care needs equitably.

Like the polar bear, supported employment is a profession skating on thin ice. Only time will tell if something so perfectly designed to help those people with the greatest support needs to find a job and flourish in the world of work, risks extinction because of an unfriendly environment entirely out of its control.

Personalisation and supported employment

Huw Davies, Kathy Melling and Paul Wilson

This guide sets out what the key issues around personalisation and supported employment are, particularly for people with a learning disability and people with autism.

It describes the supported employment model and current funding streams that can be used. The guide explores some of the challenges for jobseekers and for supported employment providers and how these might be overcome. It's available for £4 from the BILD website.



<http://www.bild.org.uk/our-services/books/practical-support-for-better-lives/personalisation-and-supported-employment/>

Supported Employment Practitioner Training



North Yorkshire County Council's supported employment team have completed our 5 day practitioner training course. The course was delivered in July to 12 members of staff and we've received some great feedback.

“ This course has been inspirational, confidence building and a bit overwhelming - I need to go away and think! ”

“ The course was very inspirational could have done another week! ”

“ Excellent knowledge and delivery ”

Also joining them was Nicole Torres-Byrne from the Gibraltar Disability Society. Nicole is campaigning for the establishment of supported employment services in Gibraltar.

Unfortunately, she got home to find that the Government was establishing a sheltered employment agency but I'm sure she'll continue to campaign for evidence-based support.

We've been commissioned to deliver another course in Cumbria. Please contact us if you're interested in your staff completing this training. We expect to be able to offer accreditation of prior learning for those who complete the course once the national standards are finalised and a qualification framework is developed.

The course covers all the essential elements of supported employment including the values base, vocational profiling, employer engagement & negotiation, job analysis, workplace support, jobcoaching techniques, health & safety, career development and quality assurance.

Ritchie's determination to work...

Richie attended Penwith College until June 2011. He hoped to find paid work; his ideal job would be a car valet. Richie has autism but is very keen to start new things as he knows that when he tries new things there are a possibility that he may like these changes.



Last year Richie spent several hours visiting places of work with his job coach in his local town and asked in every shop that he was interested in about job opportunities but there was not much available. Richie started to attend work club; on the first week he was driven in.

The next time he attended he decided that he wanted to be independent and so walked there with his friends. He has applied for many jobs at the work club and managed to get a job interview at Haven for a caravan cleaner which was a step in the right direction to getting experience in cleaning which he can use for looking for other jobs within car valeting. Richie attended the interview at Haven, but although he was successful he was unable to take up the offer of employment due to clashes with his calendar. He was concerned that if he changed the days he visited Choices he would not see his friends, which is really important to Richie.

Vacancies became available at St Ives Holiday Park for accommodation cleaners, and the Supported Employment Team contacted Richie to ask whether he

Richie worked as part of a team of four participants who are supported by a Job Coach. The team started by cleaning two chalets the first week, which took them over three hours, and by their fourth week they had would be interested. Richie was successful in securing Richie worked as part of a team of four participants who are supported by a Job Coach. The team started by cleaning two chalets the first week, which took them over three hours, and by their fourth week they had cleaned eight chalets in three and a half hours. The housekeeping staff at St Ives informed the Job Coaches that they are always pleased with the team's standard of work and have never had any complaints.

As Richie finished employment in October last year it left him with many weeks ahead with nothing to do. Richie and Jamie decided to start a recycling business. They designed their flyer, contacted small local businesses and even had an old van donated. They now have a weekly run of collecting paper, cardboard and plastic in the Penzance Area. Richie uses his support time for this venture.

This year Richie commenced employment for his second season at St Ives Bay Holiday Park on the 12th May. He is working with a new team and is enjoying meeting new people and being back at the Camp Site.

Job success for Jade!

A Brighton woman who has a learning disability has successfully found paid work at one of the city's busiest and most prestigious catering establishments.

Jade Marshall, of Stanford Avenue, did a 12-week placement at the Royal Pavilion Tea Rooms last summer. The management were so impressed that they asked her continue working there and she is now on the payroll as a part-time food and beverage assistant.

Jade is a client of Brighton & Hove City Council's supported employment team. The team has worked closely with the Royal Pavilion Tea Rooms for a number of years and set up the original work placement for Jade.

The catering industry is popular with the supported employment team's clients. As well as the Royal Pavilion Tea Rooms other organisations

that have benefited include Starbucks, Sainsbury's West Hove, the Coral Greyhound Stadium restaurant and Coffee Republic.

The Royal Pavilion's catering manager, Peter Brooks, said: *"We gave Jade a plain English version of the food and beverage assistant job description when she started and she has taken it from there."*

"She's now fully trained up, does a great job, works hard and is a pleasure to work with. It's great to see how her confidence has grown since she started here."

The council's cabinet member for adult social care and health, Councillor Rob Jarrett, said:

"We're committed to tackling inequality in the city. Our supported employment team helps dozens of local people with disabilities to increase their understanding of the needs of business and develop confidence in the workplace."



set@brighton-hove.gov.uk



There was an air of celebration at the “Movin’ On Up” campaign event in Cardiff

After many years of campaigning, users of secondary mental health services have finally gained the legal right to a holistic Care and Treatment Plan covering eight areas of their lives. The new Plans, part of the historic Mental Health (Wales) Measure, give service users the opportunity to take a comprehensive approach to their recovery from serious mental illness by recording all their recovery objectives and support needs (the eight life areas are: accommodation; education and training; finance and money; medical and other forms of treatment, including psychological interventions; parenting or caring relationships; personal care and physical well-being; social, cultural or spiritual; work and occupation).

Hafal launched a new publication designed to help service users get the most from the Plans. The guide, “Care and Treatment Planning: a step-by-step guide for secondary mental health service users” was launched along with the Code of Practice for the Mental Health (Wales) Measure by Health and Social Services Minister Lesley Griffiths AM at the Pierhead Building, Cardiff.

Hafal’s online guide is available at:

<http://www.hafal.org/hafal/publications.php>.

Commenting on the new Plans and the launch of Hafal’s guide, Cardiff service user Luke Rowlands said:

“I currently have an old Care Plan which doesn’t look at all eight life areas. I look forward to receiving a new Care and Treatment Plan and to someone sitting down with me to chat about things other than medication. The introduction of Hafal’s new guide is a positive step forward, too. The guide, along with support from Hafal’s

project in Cardiff, will support people like me to make the most of the exciting changes that are taking place in mental health in Wales.”

The “Movin’ On Up” campaign is run by service users and carers and supported by mental health charities **Hafal**, **Bipolar UK** and the **Mental Health Foundation**. 22 weekly county events are taking place and the campaign will culminate in a climb of Wales’ highest peak, Snowdon, in September. The campaign also features an interactive stand at the Royal Welsh Show and, on World Mental Health Day, at the National Assembly.

<http://www.hafal.org>

Haven opens New Recycling Site

Haven, the social enterprise specialists, has celebrated its 66 years of enlightened employment policies by opening a brand new, dedicated and secure recycling facility at Hillington Park.

The move follows a successful first year in business for Haven Recycle, initially based at the company's Atholl Avenue site, where it continues to deliver high-volume contract packing services to the drinks industry.

Haven have provided meaningful employment for disabled and disadvantaged adults for more than 30 years at Hillington Park. The company's decision to enter the profitable recycling market was proclaimed on the front page of the Hillington Herald two years ago.

Now, Haven has achieved an annual turnover of more than £2 million, and is anticipating further growth in the next few years as its new facility on Watt Road reaches its full potential. Haven Recycle has a full SEPA waste management license and offers Waste Electrical & Electronic Equipment (WEEE) recycling.

Commercial manager Ewan Fisher said: "This includes data destruction and processing of all IT and electrical equipment. Quite literally, 100% of all material collected from customers is recycled, and absolutely nothing goes to landfill."

"Haven Recycle has already secured some high-profile local customers, including NHS Greater Glasgow & Clyde, and the University of the West of Scotland. For both, we are now the sole provider of IT and electrical recycling services."

Andrew Reid, the NHS's Asset User Provisioning Manager for the area, commented: "Over the past six months, Haven Recycle have been delivering a reliable, cost-effective way of realising value from our redundant IT assets, providing best value for the taxpayer."

"It is also a good fit for the NHS ethos to be supporting a social enterprise in this manner. We hope to continue to partner with Haven Recycle, and look forward to building on the good relationship that's been established."

Ewan Fisher added: "It has been a very exciting year for Haven Recycle, from starting a brand new operation to finding ourselves

in a situation where the volume of business demands the opening of a new facility.

"This can be attributed to a genuine desire by organisations to really embrace the idea of a sustainable supply chain, both in terms of environmental responsibility and corporate social responsibility."

"I have every confidence that we can encourage even more businesses to work with Haven Recycle in this way."



www.havenrecycle.co.uk

Symonds UK sign up for Supported Employment

When Hertfordshire County Council's supported employment service approached Symonds Regional Manager, Keith Fox about job vacancies in 2010, little did Keith suspect that the contact would lead to a national collaboration around disability employment.

Symonds UK is part of the Wanzl group of companies and manages car park space for a variety of customers across the UK such as IKEA. The company has a strong family values ethos and this prompted the offer of a work experience place to a young man who had a learning disability. The placement went so well that he was offered a permanent post.

Early in 2011, Keith thought about the possibilities of replicating this at other sites and contact was made with Huw Davies, Chief Executive of the British Association for Supported Employment (BASE). After several exploratory meetings between Keith, Huw and Gary Smith, another Symonds Regional Manager, a meeting was arranged with Managing Director, Doug Jeffrey at Symonds' head office to formalise a national collaboration.

Many of Symonds retail facilities sites have now struck up a relationship with their local supported employment service which sees people with a variety of disabilities being offered work experience placements. The relationship is mutually beneficial. It offers disabled jobseekers the chance to improve their confidence and skills in a real workplace environment before seeking paid employment. For Symonds, it gives an opportunity to contribute to local communities and is fast becoming a valuable recruitment tool.

At the Coventry IKEA site, Tom Finnegan recently started a work placement. Tom's site manager, Darren Munsey, explains, "As the placement has progressed Tom has taken on more and more responsibility. This has resulted in Tom working weekends and bank holidays which are our busiest times. Its great to see how much Tom's confidence has increased since he started the placement. He has a constant smile on his face"

For Tom, it's been a big change to his routine but he's loving every minute.

“ I love working for Symonds and I just want to do a good job for the team. They have made me feel more confident in myself. I was really nervous at first but like dealing with the customers now and can't wait to learn more parts of the job. ”



It's a great start for Tom on his journey to paid employment. Huw Davies of BASE says, "We're really pleased with the way the relationship has developed with Symonds. They have a real commitment to offering training and employment opportunities and it's clear that there's a strong family spirit that runs from the boardroom through to the shop floor. We hope that this will be the start of a longstanding relationship."

Perhaps the last word should be with Darren who said, "We couldn't be more pleased with Tom. He has a great commitment to the company and always wants to do a good job. He's become a real asset to the team". Sounds like a winning relationship.

Blaenau Gwent businesswoman scoops

Leading Wales Award 2012

A local businesswoman from Ebbw Vale has beaten stiff competition to be named as this year's Leading Wales Awards winner.

Leslie Barr is Project Manager/Interim Leader at Monwel Signs & Services, a traffic sign making factory which provides jobs and training for people with disabilities and other disadvantages.

Leslie has been named as the winner in the Team Leader category, supported by Chwarae Teg Agile Nation for her leadership role at Monwel.

The Leading Wales Awards, in association with Real Radio Wales, are the prestigious pan-Wales awards that champion good leadership in Wales by identifying, recognising and celebrating individuals, who through their leadership contribute to the prosperity of Wales.

A full house of 260 people attended the eighth annual awards ceremony at the Hilton Cardiff on Thursday 31 May. This year there were 27 finalists, the largest number ever.

Leslie Barr said:

"It is a real honour to be confirmed as the winner of such a prestigious award in a category which had other highly inspirational leaders. I dedicate my award to the staff here at Monwel who have supported me over the past 18 months.

"A massive thanks also to Blaenau Gwent Council for giving me the chance to turn my life around five years ago by employing me, and for the support I have received. That will always be genuinely appreciated."



Coun. Jennifer Morgan, who attended the awards ceremony, said:

"Leslie is a truly inspirational woman, and this award was well deserved. This is a really positive bit of news for Monwel, which provides employment opportunities to people with disabilities on behalf of the Council. It is a great example of how the Council is working with local people and enterprises to build a more vibrant future for Blaenau Gwent's communities."

In addition Gareth Jones – Chief Regeneration Officer stated:

"Leslie has been instrumental in developing a project to transfer Monwel into a social enterprise and has the full support of the staff, management and trade unions – this award is recognition of her achievement".



Robert writes for hospital charity



Robert Parish who attends FACET's Computer Training facility in Glenrothes has put his talents to good use and has just donated £120 to Great Ormond Street hospital for children.



Robert is a keen poet and each week, as part of his course at FACET, he writes, types, edits and prints a poem. Last year a selection of his poems was compiled and published as part of his course work. Robert decided to sell copies of his poetry collection and to date has raised the £120 which he has donated to the hospital.

Robert is now working on volume two of his poems and hopes to raise more money for his chosen charity.

Woodside Weavers launch 'Jubilee Tartan'

Woodside Weavers, a project offering people affected by learning or physical disability, have launched their 'Jubilee Tartan' to commemorate the Queen's current celebrations.

The project is part of FACET and is run by Mary Millar, a trained weaver who gives her time voluntarily to teach traditional hand weaving techniques.

One of the participants of the project Graham Robieson, a young man with a passionate interest in tartan, has already had two of his designs registered on the official Scottish Register of Tartans. He used the traditional red white and blue with a hint of gold to create his Jubilee design which the group have named 'Jubilee Dress – Spirit of the People'

FACET

FACET provides pre-vocational training opportunities to people affected by disability and health issues and is part of Fife Employability Team Adult Services (Resources) Social Work Service, Fife Council which offers a range of services to help people with disabilities or health issues to find and keep employment. The team also works with employers to assist them in successfully employing people with disabilities.

Supported Employment Makes a Difference

Jane is enthusiastic and determined and had worked in a responsible position with a national company for over seventeen years. Jane had mental health issues, and in late 2009 had a break-down. This resulted in her being admitted to hospital, moving out of work, losing her confidence and spending a lot of time at home alone in her bedroom. However, in 2010 Jane started going to a Penumbra Project in Dunfermline, which helped her on her recovery journey.

Jane's psychologist referred her to The Fife Employment Access Trust (FEAT). When Jane met with her Employment Support Worker, Elaine, they got on well straight away. The majority of FEAT staff have personal experience of mental health conditions, and Jane felt the employment support worker's experience was key to providing Jane with the sort of support she needed. At the time, Jane says that she was "eager to work but not sure that (she was) ready".

Jane attended courses offered by FEAT including Living Life to the Full (Cognitive Behavior Therapy), which really worked for her. At first she "wasn't able to do groups", and wouldn't stand up and give her name when they started. By the end, she was a chatty group member.

Jane was interested in "giving back" to the community because she felt that she had been helped by so many people during her recovery and she was interested to work in a care environment. FEAT supported Jane to volunteer for 3 hours one day a week in a care home, which she loved. However, she wanted to do more.

With the increase in confidence the support from FEAT had brought, Jane went around care homes in her area and asked about possible employment. A relative told her about a job with Kingdom Homes, who provide residential care for older people. She applied and was offered the full-time post. Jane decided to tell her employer about her history of mental ill health and the employer was supportive from the start, saying that Jane shouldn't keep any issues or worries back, but rather come to talk to her.

When Jane began work in the middle of 2011, Elaine from FEAT would meet up with her about every two weeks to talk about the job and how Jane was feeling. She was

available if Jane wanted to call about work at any time. Overtime, that contact has decreased significantly, although the Employment Support Worker remains in touch with Jane. Jane's job has brought her satisfaction, and she says she wishes she'd been able to move into it years ago. She is a committed and skilled employee, enjoys care work, empathises with residents and is a strong member of the team. She "feel(s) good" about being a member of the night shift team, who are supportive to her. Jane says that since starting work she "doesn't have time to think about herself", and it "puts life into perspective".



Jane accepting her award

When Jane started work she was seeing a doctor weekly; a psychologist every two weeks; had a hospital appointment every two weeks and on the alternative week was going to the Penumbra project. Now, eight months after starting work, Jane sees her G.P. monthly. Jane is increasingly managing her own mental health and recovery: learning to spot the signs of a down patch approaching and taking action to go and talk to someone about it - including her manager on the night shift; and planning for changes at work, e.g. moving to the day shift, over time in line with her recovery journey.

The marked decrease in the support Jane now has from the mental health system indicates significant improvements in Jane's mental health and wellbeing. There is a positive impact on another level too, as a reduced use of services will provide virtual savings to the mental system.

Scottish Business Diversity Awards

The Scottish Union of Supported Employment (SUSE) annually awards employers and specialist employability agencies who excel in supporting people with disabilities or long-term conditions into and in work.

This year the nominations for the Scottish Business Diversity Awards will be open from **1st July until 30th September**. The award winners will be announced at a ceremony in Glasgow in November 2012.

Please nominate someone who has overcome significant challenges to gain and retain work for the employee award; or a business, work initiative or agency that has excelled in promoting diversity in the workplace and gone that extra mile to support people with disabilities.

Find out more details on the SUSE website or email pippa.suse@btinternet.com to receive a nomination form from July 1st 2012.

TESS makes inroads with Council placements and jobs

Finding the right work placement can be a challenge, but when you're disabled it can sometimes be even more difficult. But thanks to the work of TESS, The Employment Support Service - part of Coventry Council's Jobs Team - more disabled people and people who have mental health difficulties are gaining valuable work experience and jobs.

One of the people to benefit is Katie Meakin who has been on a work placement at the Christchurch House Business Service Centre since April. Katie, who is visually impaired, was referred to the service by her social worker and was found a three month placement by her Employment Advisor, Hannah Rogers.

Hannah said: "Katie wanted to gain some work experience within an office environment to develop her confidence and skills so we approached Business Services to see if they could help. They couldn't have been more helpful and positive, and they were able to place Katie with a member of their team who is also visually impaired.

"Chris Wade has been a fantastic support and showed Katie how to use specialist equipment so she can

provide admin' support alongside the rest of the team."

Over the last few weeks Katie, supported by Chris who has worked at the Council for 20 years, has learnt how to type letters and memos and use packages including e-mail, word and excel.



Chris said: "I've not done anything like this before and it's been a great experience for me helping someone learn new processes and share my knowledge. We've been building up Katie's skills bit by bit and seeing the difference it's made to Katie's confidence is remarkable."

The Employment Support Service works with employers across the city to find suitable placements and employment. Placements usually last six weeks and the team works closely

with the client and employer to ensure the right levels of support are in place. This can include support from a specialist Job Coach who works one to one with the client.

Chris and Katie's manager in the Business Service Centre, Lisa Albrighton, has found it a positive experience for her and the team. She said: "Chris has really enjoyed sharing his skills and definitely has a talent for tutoring. It's been great being able to give him the opportunity to do something different.

"It's been a great opportunity for Katie and we were more than happy to help."

And how has Katie found her placement so far?

"I'd really recommend the service. I was nervous at first but I've become more confident and learnt a lot. Chris is a real inspiration and shown me what's possible," she said.

tess@coventry.gov.uk

Survey on use of technology to support work performance... your views?

My name is Dan Biddle, and I am working with the British Assistive Technology Association, Clear and lansyst to try to understand how organisations deal with the provision of technology in the workplace to help people perform well in their jobs.

So, let me start by asking you a question. How many of you walked to work this morning? Not many I'm sure. And that's because like everyone else, we all use technology to assist us in our everyday lives. Whether it's taking the bus, catching a train or driving a car, technology is there to help us get to work ready for the day. The same applies to the workplace. We all use assistive technology every day to help us perform in our professional lives and in some cases, people use technology not only to increase productivity but also to aid actual work output.

In this survey, we want your help to understand how you currently approach the subject of Assistive Technology, what it means to you as a person, your organisation or your employees.

By taking part you will help us to change the lives of millions of people who use technology in the workplace to perform well in their roles; for example, people with dyslexia, dyscalculia or, like me, people who have a visual impairment that's not obvious to others. People with these sorts of conditions use simple solutions like altered screen contrasts and voice recognition software to make better use of computers.

Please take just ten minutes to let us know your thoughts. Your responses will be entirely confidential and non-attributable. We will even send you a copy of the final report once we have completed our research.

Please take ten minutes to complete this survey...

www.surveymonkey.com/s/2GL2598

**Dan Biddle, Head of Inclusive Services
Contacta Systems Ltd.**



You may know Dan from the publicity surrounding the 7/7 London Bombings, which is the point in Dan's life when he acquired his disability. Dan is now an access consultant, combining his professional career in construction engineering with his knowledge of accessibility issues to help businesses across the UK be more inclusive environments. He commits much of his time to influence positive change for disabled people in the workplace.

Employers recognised at event to boost job opportunities for disabled people

An event in Coventry helped companies across the region to understand their responsibilities towards recruiting and retaining disabled employees and recognised the positive work that some employers are already undertaking.

Keith Fox, Area Manager South from Symonds UK talking about his experience of working with supported employment.

Continued on page 21...



Employers: continued.

Disabled people face major barriers when seeking employment and, although many people want to work and have a wide range of skills and abilities to offer employers, unemployment rates are still far higher for disabled people than that of other groups within society. Supported Employment provides customised support for both disabled people wanting to work and employers willing to provide opportunities.

The 'Supporting Disabled Employees' event for employers was held on 3 May 2012 at Coventry Rugby Club and was a great success. Hosted by The Employment Support Service (TESS) from Coventry City Council and Warwickshire Employment Support Team (WEST) from Warwickshire County Council with support from the British Association for Supported Employment (BASE) and funding from the European Social Fund (ESF). The event was attended by more than 80 representatives from 54 businesses.

The aim of the day was for employers across Coventry and Warwickshire to learn about their responsibilities under the new Equality Act and to explore and develop ways to successfully recruit and retain disabled employees. Delegates attended workshops on Employers duties under the Equality Act and Supported Employment in Practice. In addition there was information available from a variety of local organisations including Jobcentre Plus, ACAS, the Federation of Small Businesses and Hereward College.

CLr Linda Bigham, said:

"It was thrilling that so many existing and new employers made the time to attend the event. We know that the current climate is difficult and presents a challenge for all of us but we want to work with employers to better understand their business needs. We can help them to employ fantastic people and with customised support from the service we can make a significant difference to the quality of life of disabled people."

The late and much missed BASE Training and Development Officer, Fred Bowen, said "BASE was delighted to have been invited to support this event for employers. The event was a huge success on the day and the venue was packed to capacity. This has been one of the most successful events of this kind across the country. The supported employment teams were provided with a perfect platform to raise awareness of the specialist support available to employers and celebrate their recent successes of securing paid employment for local disabled people. We would welcome the opportunity to support future events."

The event was also the ideal occasion to recognise the commitment and support of a number of employers who have worked with TESS to provide opportunities for local disabled people. Certificates of Recognition were presented to: Tommies Childcare Limited, Halfords, Primark Stores Ltd, Coventry and Warwickshire Partnership Trust, Network Rail, Asda Walsgrave, Herons Café, and Symonds.

The day was also a chance to introduce the Coventry and Warwickshire Workplace Wellbeing Charter. There are around 30 businesses already interested in the Charter across Coventry and Warwickshire and six have registered.

A Workplace Wellbeing Charter rewards companies that run their business in a positive way and support their workforce and demonstrates that they are working to a set of locally and nationally agreed standards.

Companies that register their interest in, and commitment to, the principles of the Charter will receive help and guidance to implement any necessary changes as they work towards achieving Charter status. There is a growing body of evidence to show the financial benefits enjoyed by organisations that implement wellbeing programmes, including reduced sickness absence, improved productivity and reduced staff turnover.

For further information around the Coventry and Warwickshire Workplace Wellbeing Charter, please contact Sharon Lindop on:

Tel: 024 7683 2787

Email: sharon.lindop@coventry.gov.uk

Zoo commended for backing Equality Act and hiring Jason

A TWYCROSS Zoo employee has received a certificate of recognition at a county-wide event. Assistant zoo keeper Jason Mann, who has a learning disability, accepted the award at the Supporting Disabled Employees convention.



Jason Mann, assistant keeper at Twycross Zoo, accepts a certificate of recognition from Annette Skermer, manager of WEST.

Karen Clarke, HR manager at the zoo, said: "Jason is a highly-valued member of the team and a very conscientious worker. During his time here at Twycross Zoo we feel Jason has flourished in many areas, and his interpersonal skills have developed significantly."

Jason said: "I'm very proud to receive this. I love working at the zoo and enjoy the people and animals."

Twycross Zoo was also commended for boosting job opportunities for disabled workers.

Karen added: "We are extremely pleased to be recognised in this event as it further highlights developments the zoo is making to support surrounding communities, and demonstrates our vision of giving back to the local people."

"We would encourage other organisations to get involved with WEST without hesitation, and have enjoyed a very positive experience all round throughout the entire time Jason has been a member of our keeper team at Twycross. We hope it continues well into the future."

Beacon Award winning employment scheme extended to two new colleges.

In September 2012, The Camden Society will extend its successful ProWork employment programme currently run in partnership with Lambeth College, to City and Islington College and Westminster College. ProWork embeds an employment advisor in the college to work alongside tutors and course managers supporting people to begin thinking about their progression from education to employment early on in their studies. The employment advisor provides one to one Information, advice and guidance, runs job seeking workshops, sources work placements, and supports students to apply for jobs, prepare for and attend interviews.

In the past five years, ProWork Lambeth has worked with 148 students with learning disabilities, supporting them as they prepare to leave college to find a pathway to employment. The project which was recognised by a Beacon Award for Innovative partnership in 2010, has

helped 31 students on Lambeth's employability course to find paid work and supported 61 into volunteering.

Earlier this year, The Camden Society was awarded a three year grant by The City Bridge Trust to extend the Pro Work employment project to the two further colleges.

For more information, contact Helen Key,
The Camden Society Employment Service Manager:

Email: helen.key@thecamdensociety.co.uk

Celebrations as first Unity Kitchen Apprentices graduate



On Thursday 28th June, The Camden Society celebrated the success of 16 Unity Kitchen apprentices – the first group of men and women to graduate from our tailor made apprenticeship in hospitality and catering. Unity Kitchen is a chain of catering social enterprises run by The Camden Society to provide training and apprenticeship opportunities for people with learning disabilities.

The Award ceremony took place at Unity Kitchen, Tooley Street, which is commissioned by LB Southwark to provide café and catering facilities for the local authority's recently refurbished headquarters near London Bridge.

The apprentices were joined by family and friends and applauded by Unity Kitchen's partners and staff who have supported them to complete their apprenticeships over the past 18 months. The apprentices have trained in barista skills, food hygiene and safety, food preparation and presentation and customer service; and nine of the 16 have also completed NVQ diplomas.

Throughout their training, each apprentice received specialist employment support, information and guidance from the Camden Society Employment team to prepare them for work, to job search and to apply for jobs. Since completing their apprenticeship, over one third of the apprentices

have found work, some have successfully applied for roles in Unity Kitchen's cafes in Southwark, Tower Hamlets or Lewisham, and some have found catering or service positions at the Olympics. For one woman in her fifties, the Unity Kitchen Apprenticeship has led to her first ever paid job.

In only its second year of operation, the Unity Kitchen Apprenticeship scheme has gained national recognition from the National Apprenticeship Service and is being delivered in partnership with Westminster Kingsway College.

www.unitykitchen.co.uk

BASE Regional network meetings

Scotland:

Contact: Gillian Ross (Tel. 0141 646 2550)

Email: Gillian.ross@momentumscotland.org

Next meeting: 13 November 2012

All meetings are at Momentum, Savoy Towers, Glasgow

North East:

Contact: Nerise Oldfield-Thompson (Tel. 01388 816895)

Email: nerise.oldfield@durham.gov.uk

Next meetings: 23 July 2012 (Durham)

North West:

Contact: Paul Wilson (Tel. 07714 435338)

Email: paul.wilson@base-uk.org

Next meeting: 28 September 2012

All meetings are held at Kings House, Manchester

Midlands:

Contact: Harry Corrigan (Tel. 02476 785600)

Email: hcorrigan@northamptonshire.gov.uk

Next meeting: 11 October 2012 (Warwick)

London & South East:

Contact: Robert Elston (Tel. 020 8655 3344)

Email: r.elston@statusemployment.org.uk

Next meetings: 24 July 2012, 16 October 2012

All meetings take place at the Scope offices on Market Road, London

South West:

Contact: Matt Britt (Tel. 0117 907 7200)

Email: matt.britt@brandontrust.org

Next meeting: 19 July (Bristol), 22 November 2012 (Exeter)

Wales:

Contact: Richard Welfoot (Tel. 01685 370072)

Email: richardwelfoot@mtib.co.uk

Next meeting: (to be arranged)



Minutes, dates and venues for meetings are listed on the BASE website at www.base-uk.org/regions
Please log in to view details.