



How are we doing? - Part 2

Another message from Jon Wright

I wrote in the last edition of the *B&T* about the difficult financial times we had been experiencing at **Supported Lives** since Christmas 2006, and I also talked about the actions we had taken to try and recover. Now seems a good time to update you with the progress so far.

Over the last few months we have had a significant rise in referrals of new work, and we have now almost recovered to the level of support hours that we had in Oct 2006. This is very good news, although any increase in hours means we have to find additional funding to pay staff and expenses *before* we actually reclaim any money through charges.

We also have a good number of new referrals on our waiting list, but we are not able to start them straight away as the pressure this would put on our finances in funding new staff would be too great. It is important that all new work is set up at a sensible, manageable pace.

However, the general trend is upwards and we are now able to break even every month, having paid staff and managers' salaries, expenses, running costs and Inland Revenue. We are still left with some large debts from the previous financial year, which we have arranged to repay in instalments over the next year, so that there isn't too much pressure put on our cash flow.

We do at last have some flexibility, and to this end we are creating a new post of Senior Support Worker, to assist the Team Leaders in managing the increase in work across **Supported Lives**. We hope there will be three of these posts initially,



although if the company continues to grow, we may increase this number. The posts will only be advertised internally (see elsewhere in this edition of the *B&T*) and will provide a career structure for staff who wish to take on more first line management responsibility. The grade will also be paid at a higher, incremental scale.

So, in short, we seem to be past the worst. Things are still tight, and we can't afford to relax too much, but with the steady growth we have made in the last four months, and the changes to the structure that we have already made and changes we are planning, the future is looking much brighter.

And just to prove how confident I am of the future, can I once again remind all staff that we operate a contributory stakeholder pension for all permanent staff - so please ask me or Eileen Nolan for details of the scheme and the level of **Supported Lives** contributions if you would like to be included!

Thanks again to all of you for your support and effort through these difficult times.

Who Am I?

Jon Kirkham

I'm Jon Kirkham but everybody knows me as *JK* and I've been with **Supported Lives** from the beginning and I think I am the last member of the management team to do *Who Am I?*

My work is mostly with clients who have extreme behavioural issues as a result of their learning disability. I see my own personal challenge as doing everything I can to find ways to help such people to live, and become accepted within the community. I worked as a support worker for a number of years but my 'grounding' was in the supported living sector.

My own mission has been to raise the profile of people with learning disabilities within society and educate others to become supportive and accepting of something they don't necessarily understand. I know this works from taking clients home with me and having them associate with friends, neighbours and shopkeepers etc. Some of my clients are very well known where I live now and are greeted with dignity and respect rather than sympathy.

On a personal level, I live just outside the edge of the Peak District and travel to Bradford on a daily basis. I am at present involved in renovating the house I live in and am finding that this is a costly

exercise both financially and in terms of personal injury! I love to travel and have been all over the world from India to Guatemala and Indonesia to the



JK on Lan-Tau island

Himalayas. I don't really like 'resorts' and tend to go to less accessible parts and, in October I'll be going to Borneo via Hong Kong where I hope to visit the Orang-utan conservation reserve.

Looking to the 'not too distant' future, I don't think I could ever see myself as a 'retired person' and will probably soon embark on a counselling foundation course in readiness for becoming a working senior citizen!

Wanted

New members for Supported Lives advisory committee

Currently a group of clients and carers meet two or three times a year to chew over any issues at **Supported Lives**. We would welcome some new members.

It is a great opportunity to present **Supported Lives** with any ideas, complaints, compliments, criticisms, or views you may have about the services they provide. All the information from the meetings is reported back to the **Supported Lives** directors. They also attend part of our meeting to provide us with up to date information about **Supported Lives** services. It can really help to shape services in a way that suits *you*.

If you are a client or a carer and are interested in joining us please contact me at the **Supported Lives** office and I will be more than happy to talk to you about what being a member involves. **Please don't be daunted**, we are a welcoming group.

Thank you to everyone who attended our July meeting your help and support is greatly valued.

Staff Briefing

Tuesday 18 Sept 6:00-7:30pm, with a chance to mingle after that, and maybe even slope off down the pub or out for something to eat!

The briefing will cover a range of updates and changes, and will also offer a consultation on proposed changes to the standard staff contract.

NB Draft copies of the new standardised contract will be sent out to everyone who will be affected in early September. This will give you time to study it and bring any questions or comments to the staff briefing.

Jon Wright

Sally

New Opportunities

Supported Lives' financial position has improved over the last six months and we are now in a position to expand the organisation and offer a new opportunity to our staff team.

We have decided that there is a need for a new position at *Senior Support Worker* level to assist the team leaders with their increased workload.

This position will facilitate better communication between support workers, clients and the management team and improve the overall efficiency of the organisation. It will also provide a development opportunity to staff.

The *Senior Support Worker's* duties are likely to include:

- Updating and maintaining client files, care plans and records
- Assisting Team Leaders with general administration
- Mentoring new members of staff
- Liaising with clients and managers to improve communication

The exact role will be finalised shortly and interview dates will be arranged. If you are interested in the role then please contact me.

If necessary I can offer some opportunities to demonstrate your skills before the recruitment process begins.

Owen

Reminder To All Staff

Attention all staff. When there has been a change to a shift or when you arrange a shift with a client/carer then you must inform your Team Leader directly or the following day. This is very important for invoicing purposes so we can maintain a professional service. *Thank You*

Eileen

National Free Travel

Disabled people, blind people and people aged 60 or over will be entitled to free, off-peak local bus travel throughout England from April 2008.

If you are in one of these groups, you will need a new *English National Concessionary Pass* for free travel even if you have a current Metro permit.

You can order your new pass from West Yorkshire Post Offices and Bus Station Travel Centres from Monday 23 July. (When you order your new pass you have the chance win up to £500 in one of four prize draws.)

To avoid long queues, Metro has set different dates for applying, depending on your surname. If your surname begins with:

A, B, C, D or **E**

apply **Mon 23 Jul** to **Sat 4 Aug**

F, G, H, I, J or **K**

apply **Mon 6 Aug** to **Sat 18 Aug**

L, M, N, O or **P**

apply **Mon 20 Aug** to **Sat 1 Sep**

Q, R, S, or **T**

apply **Mon 3 Sep** to **Sat 15 Sep**

U, V, W, X, Y or **Z**

apply **Mon 17 Sep** to **Sat 29 Sep**

If you miss your dates you can apply from Monday 1 October onwards, but this may mean you face a longer wait.

To order your new pass, you must go in person to one of these outlets. You will need to show your current permit and provide one recent full-faced, passport-sized colour photograph.

If your address has changed, you'll also have to provide proof of residence in West Yorkshire (such as a council tax bill, bank statement or recent gas, electricity or telephone bill)

More details can be found online at www.wymetro.com

Brett

Changing Places Toilets

The *Changing Places Consortium* has launched a campaign on behalf of the thousands of people with profound and multiple learning disabilities and their carers, and the many other disabled people who cannot use standard accessible toilets.

They need *Changing Places* toilets. These are toilets with enough space for disabled people and their carers, and the right equipment, including a height adjustable changing bench and a hoist.



There are almost no public *Changing Places* toilets in the UK. Providing these toilets in public places would make a dramatic difference to the lives of thousands of people who desperately need these facilities.

The *Changing Places* website (www.changing-places.org) has details of their campaign and a list of all the toilets in the country that meet their standards.

In the Bradford area we currently have five of these:

Bradford Central Library

Carlisle Business Centre
Carlisle Road

Bowling Pool

Flockton Road

Eccleshill Leisure Centre

Harrogate Road

Keighley Leisure Centre

Victoria Park, Keighley.

Full details of the locations and opening times can be found on the *Changing Places* website or on the resources board at the **Supported Lives** office.

Brett

A Grand Day Out Wycoller Country Park



Country walks, archaeology, a pretty village and the ruins of Wycoller Hall make this a delightful place for a day out.

Wycoller Hall is believed to be the model for Ferndean Manor in Charlotte Bronte's *Jane Eyre*. An Aisled Barn, built in the



1630's is one of the finest examples of its kind and is used for displays on the history and ecology of the area.

There are lots of footpaths going out into the surrounding countryside, but for those not able to take advantage of the rural walks, much of the area around the village, hall and barn is wheelchair accessible. There's a picnic area overlooking the duckpond.

To get there by car, take the B6143 out of Keighley towards Oakworth and carry on over the moor towards Laneshaw Bridge and you'll come to the top car park. The descent from here to Wycoller is quite steep. Disabled parking is permitted in Wycoller village, which can be reached via Trawden.

If you want to use public transport, bus 25 from Keighley runs every 30 minutes to Laneshaw Bridge, from where it's a 1½ mile walk to the park.

For more information online go to: <http://tinyurl.com/2zctbz>

Brett

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