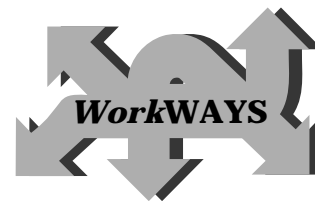


Team Work



News and information for people with learning & work in mind

Five Years of WorkWAYS

Welcome to the 25th edition of *TeamWork* celebrating the 5th anniversary of WorkWAYS.

During the last 5 years we have received 1000 applications and provided information, guidance and practical support for people whose mental health affects their ability to find employment, training, education or voluntary work. Over 420 people have started or been helped to maintain their chosen work and learning activity.

Run by Devon Partnership NHS Trust, WorkWAYS is now widely recognised for its expertise and innovation and is involved in developing national as well as regional and local initiatives. We also work in close partnership with National Institute for Mental Health England (NIMHE) in implementing the government's social inclusion agenda on employment for people experiencing mental ill health.

Our local partnerships with over 50 learning and work providers – colleges, voluntary services, employment agencies, training organisations, statutory services – have been key to the success of WorkWAYS. Within this edition you will read comments from a sample of those we have worked with.

People who have used our service also offer their reflections – people whose lives have been improved and changed through involvement with WorkWAYS and the organisations we work with.

Useful numbers

Connexions	203603
Citizens Advice Bureau	201210
Council Tax & Housing Benefits	265440
Exeter College	205222
Exeter Volunteer Centre	202055
Exeter Mental Health Service Users Group	201218
First Step Project	202055
Jobcentre Plus	474700
Meadow House	208900
MIND Exeter & East Devon	204499
New Leaf	823720
Nextstep	0845 8 50 50 70
PLUSS	0800 91 777 92
Rethink	01395 224166
St Loye's Foundation	255428
Skills for Life & Learning at Broadclyst	466643
Springboard	204496
Victory Centre	383788
WorkWAYS	208833

All prefixed by 01392 unless shown

Due to the support from WorkWAYS, I am now a part-time cleaner.

That simple statement belies the magnificent progress made by the person concerned from being really quite poorly to now being well and maintaining paid employment.

From those anxious first steps through the WorkWAYS door in to a supported work environment. To gaining then losing a job. To dealing with major benefit problems. The use of a vocational coach providing practical on-site support in work. A supportive employer and understanding line management. A temporary contract to a permanent one.

All those factors have made progress not only possible but also remarkable.

**Read Team Work online at
www.workways.org.uk**

The Story So Far...

I have always found all the staff incredibly supportive and helpful. I can remember going to the Jobcentre and although I'd been before and could have gone by myself, it was very comforting having someone with me just in case things became difficult. I can remember the encouragement given when applying for jobs... I always felt that eventually something would turn up. Eventually, I did find a job and I'm still doing it.

Paul

- **Summer 2000** In response to the Dept of Health's National Service Framework for Mental Health, an initial meeting of service users, health professionals and representatives of local learning and work agencies discuss the service wanted to help people with mental health problems find or remain in learning and work.
- **Summer 2000 First edition of *TeamWork***: a new quarterly newsletter for all with an interest in learning and work for people experiencing mental ill health.
- **December 2000** Independent research published indicates a clear wish for an easily accessible, shop-fronted service in the city centre.
- **Spring 2001** Steering group begins regular meetings to plan the new service.

I am always amazed when visiting WorkWAYS by the latest plans, developments and ideas. WorkWAYS always seems to be such an innovative service - open to new suggestions and ideas and creative ways of working. This has enabled it to grow and expand in response to changing needs. I think the fact that it works effectively with both those seeking employment or other vocational opportunities and employers provides a unique perspective and can only be beneficial to all those using the service. You always get a friendly welcome from all the people there.

Helen Fee, Mental Health Advisor, University of Exeter

- **November 2001 WorkWAYS starts**: based at Redhills House in Exeter and managed by Christine Oliver. No referral procedure – people living in Exeter who have a care co-ordinator can complete application form themselves to access the service.
- **March 2002** Launch of WorkWAYS website at www.workways.org.uk
- **May 2002** WorkWAYS moves to shop front premises in the King Street Business Centre in the centre of Exeter. Service now available to anyone who has talked to their GP (care coordinator no longer a pre-requisite).
- **July 2002** Official opening by Valerie Howell, then Chief Executive of Devon Partnership NHS Trust. Over 100 people attended during the day.
- **Autumn 2002** WorkWAYS display tours locations in Exeter – including Sainsbury's, the main Post Office, the cathedral, the theatre – ordinary places, places where people go.
- **November 2002** Booklet produced for employers: 1000 copies circulated to local businesses.

When I first came to meet people at WorkWAYS I was not sure what to expect. Eventually, after a few visits, I understood what type of help was made available to me; the interesting thing is that I was given the opportunity to reflect and decide for myself which type of help I needed. This was going slowly, but the pace was just right for me and I feel that I am walking forward now. I found the people I met patient, discreet and understanding. Their services and help have not only been practical, but very reassuring mentally. It is a good feeling indeed to know that a group of friendly professionals have their door open for you.

ALGB

- **April 2003** University of Plymouth's Careers Service becomes the 50th WorkWAYS Affiliated Organisation.
- **June 2003** WorkWAYS short listed for a Positive Practice Award from the National Institute for Mental Health in England (NIMHE).

- **September 2003** WorkWAYS wins Exeter City Learning Award for Working in Partnership with other learning and work organisations. WorkWAYS begins service supporting students for the University of Exeter.
- **October 2003** Event at the Southgate Hotel, Exeter to say thank you to those who have supported WorkWAYS in its first 2 years. Attended by employers, learning and work organisations, health professionals. One delegate, Alex Muir-Mackenzie, then of Devon & Cornwall Constabulary, raises the idea of an initiative to support employers.

WorkWAYS have made an invaluable contribution - particularly through the MINDFUL EMPLOYER website. This resource provides comprehensive information for both employers and Job Retention Case Managers in helping to create healthy work environments.

Roger Butterworth, Independent Consultant

- **November 2003** Meetings begin to discuss and develop Alex's idea. Meetings take place every couple of months involving a wide range of employers – small, medium & large, public, private & voluntary sector – and various disciplines – HR, occupational health, business owners, line managers – all of whom brought together what became MINDFUL EMPLOYER.
- **May 2004** Awards for All provides funding to launch Ways4ward – giving free use of telephones, stationery & postage, the internet, newspapers and staff assistance to help people look for jobs, courses and voluntary work.
- **June 2004** Additional office space acquired in King Street Business Centre. New team of Vocational Coaches join staff to provide additional support.

For me, WorkWAYS great strength is its staff. They really care about the people they support, and offer an open, non-judgemental service that gives their clients the right balance of motivation and breathing space in their quest to move on.

In addition, I'm sure that the changing attitudes that I've picked up amongst local organisations towards people with mental health problems is in no small way due to WorkWAYS' efforts to promote positive attitudes towards mental health in the press and the community at large.

Feedback I receive from my volunteers is that are supportive without being pushy, and that they provide a safe and confidential space where people can discuss ideas and discover ways forward.

John Stammers, First Step Project, Exeter Volunteer Centre

- **October 2004 Launch of MINDFUL EMPLOYER** at Southgate Hotel – event sponsored and supported by local businesses and attended by 70 employers. As a result, WorkWAYS approached by NIMHE to work across the South West in engaging employers and supporting projects helping people secure employment – all as part of implementing the government report on mental health and social inclusion.
- **Autumn 2004 500th application received**

CONGRATULATIONS WORKWAYS - 5 years of providing help, support and encouragement for people to access and stay in work - people like myself who, without you, would not have returned to employment and/or been able to keep it. For me, one of the things that stands out about you as an organisation is the warm, welcoming, accepting, non-judgemental, supportive, encouraging attitude of all your staff I've had contact with. Positive human, relational qualities that make such a huge difference and are lost in many areas of life and society these days. Being seen and responded to as a person helps me to believe in myself, have a sense of being someone with something to offer and thus 'employable'. THANK YOU ALL. Knowing you are there if I need support or advice or get into difficulties helps me keep going at work.

JW

- **April 2005 Work for NIMHE commences.** The following 12 months see increased profile of WorkWAYS and MINDFUL EMPLOYER in the South West and new national contacts.
- **July 2005** MINDFUL EMPLOYER website launched at www.mindfulemployer.net, costs of design and hosting sponsored by local employers.
- **Autumn 2005** University of Exeter commissions WorkWAYS to provide a bespoke job retention service for their staff.
- **January 2006** Working in partnership with PLUSS, **WorkWAYS expands to East Devon** and provides a limited service to people in Mid Devon.
- **March 2006** Working in partnership with Disability Rights Commission and the Sainsbury Centre for Mental Health, training sessions are delivered to a range of public sector employers on new disability legislation.

The Disability Rights Commission, in its role is the enforcement body for the Disability Discrimination Act, is keen to work with partners such as WorkWAYS and the MINDFUL EMPLOYER initiative, to enable organisations to understand their duties under the DDA, but also to help them understand what constitutes good practice and to help them develop this.

Over the last year, I have worked closely with WorkWAYS and MINDFUL EMPLOYER on a number of initiatives. The DRC has found that working alongside WorkWAYS and MINDFUL EMPLOYER has been extremely fruitful, as mental health and employment was not an area that the DRC had really concentrated upon before, and so we were able to learn from practitioners in the field about what the issues are and what really works to solve them.

Michelle Valentine, Practice Development Officer, Disability Rights Commission

- **April 2006** Second year of funding from NIMHE commences by which time our work is widely recognised at a national level with MINDFUL EMPLOYER also spreading to other areas of the UK. During our NIMHE work, we have been consulted by government departments, spoken at many conferences, organised events, provided training and job retention support to employers, assisted employment projects, published guidance and information and run local networks.
- **July 2006** 50th signatory to MINDFUL EMPLOYER Charter for Employers who are Positive About Mental Health
- **October 2006** WorkWAYS represented at launch of Dept of Health's Action on Stigma initiative to address discrimination and stigma in the workplace.

I was always made to feel welcome when phoning and when I called in for meetings there was always a positive and friendly greeting which helped put me at ease. They show great professionalism at all times and ready to help by phoning third parties or even attending meetings at other organisations with me. You are dealt with as an individual and offered options so that you can consider the best solution for your own circumstances. Solutions are not imposed on you. They have good contacts...this gives you confidence that what is being offered is realistic and achievable.

NH

- **November 2006**

5th ANNIVERSARY OF WorkWAYS...

1000th APPLICATION...

25th EDITION OF *TeamWork*

If you have any contributions or comments, please get in touch:

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TeamWork is a photocopyable resource – please make copies for others.

Devon Partnership 
NHS Trust