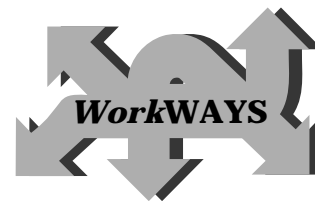


# Team Work



**News and information for people with learning & work in mind**

## Working Together Across the Region

In the last edition of *TeamWork* (Issue 27), we referred to the development of Regional Employment Teams bringing together key stakeholders to produce a regional strategy in relation to the employment of people with mental health problems.

The South West held a very successful inaugural summit in September, attended by a wide range of organisations including ACAS, South West Chamber of Commerce, Learning & Skills Council, NHS Trusts and local services from Bath and Exeter, Dorset and Wiltshire.

Key topics discussed were benefit issues and barriers, the lack of consistent local support services across this geographically broad region of ours, the forthcoming expansion of Pathways to Work and the need to understand the issues affecting employers.

An embryonic regional action plan was discussed which will be developed further at the next meeting towards the end of November. For more information on the South West approach please contact Trish Stokoe ([trish.stokoe@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:trish.stokoe@hotmail.co.uk)) or for a national view or details of other regions contact Simon Francis at the National Social Inclusion Programme ([simon.francis@dwp.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:simon.francis@dwp.gsi.gov.uk))

### 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
Nextstep	0845 8 50 50 70
New Leaf	823720
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

### Engaging with Employers

There has perhaps never been a better time for employment and vocational services to engage with employers in the recruitment and retention of staff who experience mental ill health.

Attitudes by and towards employers are changing – and that can only be good news!

This edition of *TeamWork* brings you up to date with work being done by SHIFT, Sainsbury Centre for Mental Health and our own MINDFUL EMPLOYER initiative.

**Read Team Work online at  
[www.workways.org.uk](http://www.workways.org.uk)**

## Hillcrest Branch to become a social firm

There are big changes ahead for the gardening and grounds maintenance team of Hillcrest Branch, which has emerged in recent years from Exminster-based Hillcrest Growers which is part of Devon Partnership NHS Trust's New Leaf Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Service.

On the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2008 Hillcrest Branch will take pioneering steps to become only the third organisation to externalise from the NHS as a social firm. This means it will be an independent 'not for profit' company limited by the guarantee of its board of directors. In the meantime, Grace Michaels, the newly appointed manager for the project, is being employed by Exeter Council for Voluntary Service in order to underline the proposed separateness of the new venture from the NHS.

The aim of Hillcrest Branch is to act as a stepping stone between current VR services and regular employment. Giving those who have suffered with mental health issues, a supported but realistic working environment, in which they can gain the skills they need to help them back into work.

A signatory to the MINDFUL EMPLOYER Charter for Employers who are Positive About Mental Health, Hillcrest Branch currently employs seven part time NHS bank staff, who have come through pathways such as New Leaf and WorkWAYS. It holds a variety of contracts in both the public and private sector, with organisations including Devon Partnership NHS Trust, Devon Community Housing, PLUSS and Westbank League of Friends. New contracts are currently being sought.

Hillcrest Branch also offers 10 weekly training placements via the NHS mental health services, offering therapy through the medium of horticulture. Some of those involved in this program may be offered a paid position within Branch when a vacancy becomes available assuming they have developed the necessary skills required to meet the job description.

"This is an exciting time for Hillcrest Branch," says Grace Michaels. "I'm delighted to be managing such an interesting and sustainable business that uses social and therapeutic horticulture as a means of helping people back into paid employment. Becoming an independent social firm is a very positive step for everyone involved, as it allows us the freedom of being able to directly reinvest our profits back into the business. This will enable expansion and offer more stability for the staff, ultimately allowing more people to benefit from the services we offer.

"The team are grateful for all the support being offered by DPT in allowing us to continue to operate from the New Leaf site and also for the clinical support it will receive from Don Crispin, New Leaf Manager and Christine Wardle, Manager of Vocational Rehabilitation Services."

An official launch of the new company is planned for April 25<sup>th</sup> 2008

For more information about social firms visit [www.socialfirms.co.uk](http://www.socialfirms.co.uk) or contact Christine Wardle at WorkWAYS on 01392 208836

## Reviewing the Information

*Bob Grove, Director of the Sainsbury Centre for Mental Health's Employment Programme writes about an important new initiative designed to improve the quality and impact of materials and resources designed to help employers to promote mental health and/or manage mental ill health in the workplace.*

'Recently there has been an increase in the number of such products - many of very high quality - but with the attendant risk of duplication, employer confusion and in some cases of poor quality which serve to misinform or give unintended but nonetheless harmful messages.

'In order to help organisations or individuals who are developing or trying to make such resources more widely available, the SHIFT campaign has asked the Sainsbury Centre to coordinate an Independent Review Panel which will advise on draft materials in development or review finished products against a common, published set of criteria. The service is free, confidential, and submission is entirely voluntary. The reviews of finished products will be published on the SHIFT website only with the permission of the producers.

'The advantages of submitting materials prior to completion are in having the views of experts at an early stage and the avoidance of costly mistakes. The Panel will give priority to advising on materials in development so as not to delay publication. Submission of finished products gives producers the added credibility of a published expert review and free publicity. It will also help producers in decision making about future improvements and new editions. Given that reviews will only be published with the producer's permission and that where a review is not published the submission will remain confidential, there is no risk to the organisation concerned.

'If you are thinking of submitting something for review, please email Jenni Bacon at SCMH ([jenni.bacon@scmh.org.uk](mailto:jenni.bacon@scmh.org.uk)) for further information about the Review Panel, the process and a short questionnaire to give us some basic information about the materials you are submitting.'

## SHIFT Line Managers' Resource

Following on from the *Action on Stigma* campaign, SHIFT have revised and update the popular Line Managers' Resource.

Originally produced by the former *mindout for mental health* campaign, the Line Managers' Resource was seen as one of the essential aids for employers. The role of the line manager is crucial and this resource, which is linked to further information on SHIFT's website, contains many good points of advice and information.

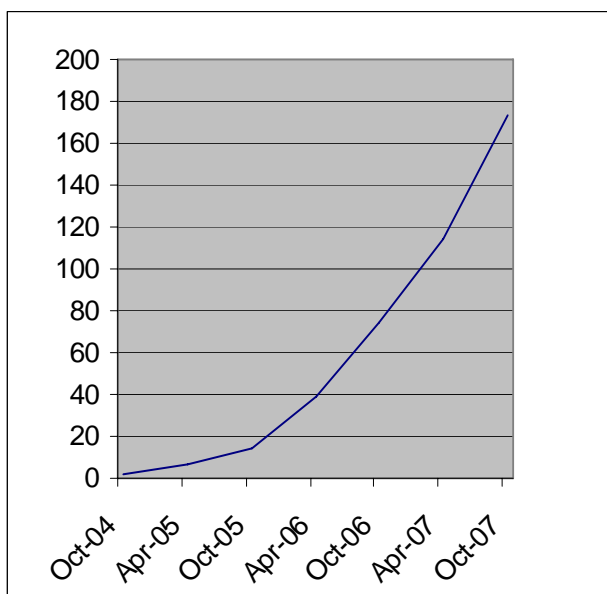
You can download a pdf from [www.shift.org.uk/employment.html](http://www.shift.org.uk/employment.html) and hard copies (which are free) can be ordered by e-mailing your address to [employment@csip.org.uk](mailto:employment@csip.org.uk).

By the way, the original *mindout* version is also still available in pdf format on the Information page of [www.mindfulemployer.net](http://www.mindfulemployer.net)

# MINDFUL EMPLOYER<sup>®</sup>

It's three years since 70 employers, ITV News and Ben Bradshaw, MP for Exeter (and now Health Minister and also Minister for the South West), came together for the launch of MINDFUL EMPLOYER. Little did we realise then, just how popular it would become and how it would grow from 'a little local idea' to a nationally respected initiative!

Since then, the number of employers who regularly receive information about the initiative has grown to over 450 and the Charter for Employers who are Positive About Mental Health has attracted particular interest – as this graph showing the number of signatories demonstrates....



Now, over 180 employers employing in excess of 220,000 employees have made this commitment. They are split almost equally between public, private and voluntary sectors, representing small, medium and 'local large' organisations (NHS Trusts, County Councils) alike. Just under half are in the South West of England with the rest spread across the UK.

The Sainsbury Centre for Mental Health have not only joined the long list of signatories but have also secured funding from the Big Lottery Fund to develop MINDFUL EMPLOYER in the South East which a very exciting development.

MINDFUL EMPLOYER has also been shortlisted in the Innovative Partnership category of the Care Services Improvement Partnership (CSIP) *Positive Practice Awards 2007*. 107 entries were made in that category and we're in the final three! 'And the winner is...' well, we'll know if it's us on Monday 17<sup>th</sup> December at a special ceremony in London.

In the meantime, keep visiting [www.mindfulemployer.net](http://www.mindfulemployer.net) for information, details of events, local support services and much more and do contact us if we can help your employer.

## Something to say?

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

TeamWork, WorkWAYS, King Street Business Centre, 7-9 King Street, Exeter EX1 1BQ

Tel/fax: 01392 208833 E-mail: [workways@devonptnrs.nhs.uk](mailto:workways@devonptnrs.nhs.uk)

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

Devon Partnership   
NHS Trust