

TeamWork

News and information for people with learning & work in mind

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Looking Ahead

2011 will see the 10th Anniversary of Workways.

We will be marking this event with a DVD about the service, which has been facilitated by the Workways Support Group, and a brand new look to our website at www.workways.org.uk.

If you have any other ideas about how we can mark the occasion then please do contact us.

Useful Numbers

Be Involved Devon	201218
Connexions	203603
Citizens Advice Bureau	0844 4994101
Council Tax & Housing Benefits	265440
Exeter College	205222
Exeter Volunteer Centre	202055
First Step Project	202055
Jobcentre Plus	473916
MIND Exeter & East Devon	204499
Nextstep	0845 8 50 50 70
New Leaf	823720
Patient Advice & Liaison Services	402093
PLUSS	0800 91 777 92
Recovery & Independent Living	208900
Rethink	01395 224166
St Loye's Foundation	255428
Workways	677050

All prefixed by 01392 unless shown

Dates for your diary

- Workways Support Group – 13th December
- Swempnet/Mindful Employer conference – 16th February 2011

Places still available for the following:

- Mental Health First Aid training – 25th/26th January 2011
- Benefits Overview session – 30th March 2011

If you are interested in any of the above, please contact us on 01392 677050 or visit our website.

Read *TeamWork* online at:

www.workways.org.uk

How Jobcentre Plus supports people with Mental Health Conditions

In the UK, approximately 1 million people claim Incapacity Benefits due to mental health conditions, and in Devon alone there are around 7000 people. However, we know, that with the right support, many of these people will be able to return to work.

Since 2009, Jobcentre Plus has increased the support it offers to people with mental health conditions, and is working closer with other organisations, like Workways, to ensure the links between health and employment are strengthened. Every Jobcentre Plus District has a Mental Health Co-ordinator in post whose job is to identify and build links with local organisations, and ensure that Jobcentre Plus advisers have a good knowledge of what support is available in their local area and can signpost people effectively to it.

This will become increasingly more important as customers receiving Incapacity Benefits are re-assessed and move to **Employment and Support Allowance** or **Jobseeker's Allowance** from early 2011. Advisers are receiving training on how to work more effectively with customers who have mild to moderate common mental health conditions, for which they will need support while complying with the requirements to be more active in preparing for their return to work.

There are many other services Jobcentre Plus can offer to people with physical and mental disabilities, including:

- **Disability Employment Advisers (DEA)** - specialist advisers who are responsible for providing support to Customers who, because of the severity or complexity of barriers associated with their disability, need help in finding work
- **Work Choice** – a new programme, introduced from 25th October 2010, which replaced Work Step, Workprep and the Job Introduction Scheme. Work Choice supports disabled people who have more complex needs, primarily those who are likely to need more intensive specialised support to find employment or to retain their position when they have entered work.
- **Access to Work** assists disabled people who are in paid employment or with a job or a Work Trial to start by providing practical support with overcoming work related obstacles from disability. Some of the things Access to Work can pay towards are:
 - Communication Support at Interview
 - Travel to Work
 - Support Worker
 - Adaptations to Premises and Equipment
 - Special Aids and Equipment
 - Miscellaneous including Travel in Work

For more information about how Jobcentre Plus can help you, telephone 0845 604 3719 or go to: www.direct.gov.uk/en/DisabledPeople/Employmentsupport/WorkSchemesAndProgrammes/index.htm

Sue Parr, Mental Health Co-ordinator, Jobcentre Plus

The Equality Act 2010

The Equality Act 2010 has superseded the Disability Discrimination Act among other legislation. One of the major changes brought is that except in very restricted circumstances, employers are not allowed to ask any job applicant about their health or any disability until the person has been offered a job either outright or on conditions, or included in a pool of successful candidates to be offered a job when a position becomes available. This includes asking questions in interviews or as part of the application process – unless it is to enable positive action to be taken (such as that related to the Positive About Disabled People 'Two Ticks'), relates to reasonable adjustments for the interview or for equal opportunities monitoring.

Click on the following link for more information: www.mindfulemployer.net/law.html

Personal story by Cathie Freeman, Workways Vocational Coach

I reached a stage in my life where my cup of dealing with life's challenges quickly filled and began to overflow. Having recently had my second child, my husband being on active duty in Afghanistan and the severe illness and subsequent loss of a significant family member brought all the plates I was spinning crashing down. My biggest shock was that I worked in mental health and did not see it coming. I felt like a light had gone out inside of me which left me with feelings of uncertainty and anguish. I finally visited my GP who diagnosed me with moderate to severe depression. Accepting this diagnosis was difficult however once I did it allowed me to focus and start my recovery journey.

Looking back on this difficult time it is clear as to what enabled me to recover in the quickest time. Firstly was the unquestionable support from my family and secondly was the being able to continue working. I am very proud of the job I do and it is in essence a big part of my identity and being able to keep one consistent enabled my mental health to stabilise, I am convinced, much quicker than it would had I stopped working. I was very supported by my manager, allowing me to cut my hours slightly as well as regular supervision to make sure I was keeping on top my workload. I am also privileged to be working in an incredibly supportive team who provided a wonderful environment for me to work through my illness.

I never believed I would ever suffer from depression as I'm sure most people do not, having lived through this it is an insidious illness that I did not realise how bad I was until I started feeling better. My family and friends have also commented on how they can now see how unwell I was now my light is back on again. I have made many changes to keep myself well and will continue to do so as I look forward to the future.

The Workways Support Group

Latest News:

The Workways Support Group was shortlisted for the Working Together award in Devon Partnership Trust's **Celebrating Achievement Awards**. In October a small group of the members went along to the awards ceremony and the Group was Highly Commended for their achievements.

Workways is also working on setting up a Support Group in Exmouth as requested by clients in East Devon.

Anyone who is using, or has used, the Workways service is welcome to attend the group. The group meets at Workways on the 2nd Monday of every month – the next meeting will be on **Monday 13th December 11-1pm**.

If you would like any further information about the Support Group then contact Becky or Cathie at Workways on 01392 677050.

Changes to Incapacity Benefits

Incapacity Benefit, Severe Disablement Allowance and Income Support paid because of illness or disability are being phased out. Between now and 2014, all existing claims will be reviewed by Jobcentre Plus to see if people are capable of work or qualify for other benefits. This change will not affect people already claiming Employment and Support Allowance or people due to reach State Pension age before 6 April 2014.

Between now and 2014, Jobcentre Plus will write to each claimant when their benefit claim is going to be reviewed. After writing, Jobcentre Plus will phone to check the letter has been received. This will provide a chance to ask questions and to tell them if any extra help is needed. Jobcentre Plus will then send a questionnaire to complete. This questionnaire will ask about how long term health condition or disability affects the ability to complete everyday tasks. The information given will help to decide if a face-to-face Work Capability Assessment is needed. This assessment will help Jobcentre Plus find out what whether the claimant might be capable of work. Until the claim is reviewed, people will continue to get their current benefit, as long as they still meet the conditions for that benefit.

Remember, this process will take place over the next 3-4 years and not everyone will be contacted at the same time. There's more information at www.direct.gov.uk/ibchanges

Stop Press: Read more about the government's proposals for the Work Capability Assessment at www.dwp.gov.uk/policy/welfare-reform/employment-and-support/wca-independent-review/

Mental Health First Aid

Mental Health First Aid is the help given to someone experiencing a mental health problem before professional help is obtained. The aims are:

- to preserve life where a person may be a danger to themselves or others
- to provide help to prevent the mental health problems developing into a more serious state
- to promote the recovery of good mental health
- to provide comfort to a person experiencing a mental health problem

Mental Health First Aid does not teach people to be therapists. However, it does teach people how to recognise the symptoms of mental health problems, how to provide initial help and how to guide a person towards appropriate professional help. A course in Mental Health First Aid will be run at Workways on 25 & 26 January.

Download more information and booking form from www.workways.org.uk – book by 17 December to beat the VAT increase.

Swempnet & Mindful Employer conference – 16 Feb 2011, Exeter

Dame Carol Black, National Director for Health & Work is the keynote speaker at this major conference on employment and mental health. In these challenging and uncertain times, this conference provides an opportunity to explore key issues affecting the employment of people with mental health conditions.

Organised by SWEMPNET, a network of providers of mental health vocational rehabilitation, and MINDFUL EMPLOYER, this event is for occupational therapists, social workers, CPNs, employment advisors, business directors, HR & Occupational Health professionals, CEOs and line managers.

Other speakers include Derek Mowbray, Peter Bates and Jane Abrahams. Download more information and booking form from www.workways.org.uk – early bird rate available.

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If you have any ideas or feedback
regarding *Teamwork*, please get in
touch:

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Exeter
EX1 1QA

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Fax: 01392 677079

Email: info@workways.org.uk

Advertise in Teamwork

Do you provide information, advice,
training or support to people with mental
health issues, employers or learning and
work organisations?

You can advertise your service to our
readership of over 1200 learning and
work organisations, employers, social
care and health professionals and also
on the Internet.

An advert costs just £25 inc VAT per
edition.

Workways is a service of Devon Partnership NHS Trust
Working in partnership with



Promoting mental health through learning and work