Introduction

Kirklees Employment Service is a specialist employment service designed to offer employment support to people with mental health issues and also individuals with autistic spectrum conditions and early onset dementia. Kirklees Employment Service aims to match individuals to the type of work and workplace in which they can succeed.

The people who use our services are central to everything we do. We believe that each person is unique, and should have the opportunity to take control over his or her life, and to develop new meanings and purposes. We concentrate on the person and his or her personal needs, choices and aspirations, rather than on diagnostic categories or labels.

Some of the benefits people experience from getting back into work or education;
- Making new friends, developing a sense of identity
- Keeping busy and establishing a routine
- Getting involved in the local community and feeling useful
- A sense of achievement
- Learning new skills
- Gaining confidence

“KES was a big help to me in many ways and I would encourage anyone to get a referral if they felt unable to gain employment. My advisor was lovely and always tried to help as best she could, also she helped me with my self confidence”.

Supports Employment Service

Supports people to return to paid employment, voluntary work, work placements or further education. We offer information, advice and guidance in one to one sessions with Employment Advisors, and we deliver a range of group based learning opportunities.

Our aim is to encourage each individual’s sense of independence, purpose and fulfilment, and develop the skills necessary to manage their mental health problems and return to work or training. Our fully flexible range of work-related support enables individuals to join the workforce for the first time, re-join after a period of absence, retrain in the career of their choice or retain their current position with retention support.
General developments

This year we were able to successfully recruit a Peer Support Coordinator, with a great deal of knowledge and experience. She has recruited 19 potential volunteers, of these some have co-facilitated our Basic IT course and our art group, and others are observing our Confidence to Work course in preparation for co-facilitating future courses.

The art group meets in a community venue, and is facilitated by a volunteer and the Peer Support Coordinator. The volunteer is passionate about art; it is not an art course, people are guided in the best techniques to create whatever they want.

“My adviser helped me so much over the last nine months or so; she made me feel very at ease at our first meeting at Cleckheaton Library and ever since. I want to thank her for all the help she gave me in helping me overcome my fear of meeting new people and for arranging for me to go on a mini Health and Social Care course. Also for finding out about the Introduction to Social Care course at Kirklees College and for her help with getting me the voluntary job at the Mencap shop in Dewsbury. Plus helping me with my CV and covering letter and with the application form when I applied (successfully) for a Residential Support Worker position with Mencap. On the day of my interview she texted me to say Good luck. I could not of done any of this without her help”.

Once again we have worked hard at ensuring that people get to hear about our service; we have been represented at Job Centre Plus Jobs Fairs and World Mental Health Day events. We have also promoted the service to GP surgeries, Sure Start Centres and Community Mental Health Teams. And we held a ‘Volunteer Day’ to recruit people who would be interested in becoming Peer Mentors, i.e. people with lived experience of mental health problems who feel able to help others in their recovery journey by providing Peer Support. This took place in Queensgate Market in Huddersfield and we recruited 12 volunteers, we were also joined by the Mayor of Kirklees.

Our Basic IT course is a new innovation for this year, the course covers things like how to use a mouse and keyboard, and how to get started with word processing and using the internet. The feedback from this course has been excellent, with one person saying it was the best IT course he’d ever attended. One of our Peer volunteers has been helping to run this course.

Our Confidence to Work course has continued this year, with very positive feedback again and it is now included in the Recovery College prospectus.
We have worked closely with Job Centre Plus again this year, delivering mental health awareness sessions to about 100 staff. We have also developed a streamlined referral process to make this easier for busy Work Coaches.

Staff have received training this year in Dementia Awareness and strategies for supporting people from the Alzheimer's Society. Also Specialist Autism Services trained our staff to a more advanced level in working with people on the Autism spectrum, building on the basic awareness training we did the year before.

Earlier in the year we received funding to develop an Autism friendly room. This has been done, and it has beanbags and easy chairs and we had it re-decorated in pastel colours with soft lighting. There are relaxation lamps available and two computers with ‘talk and type’ software, and easy to use keyboards and mice. This room is called the ‘Wellbeing room’ and is available for use by partner organisations who work with people on the Autism spectrum.

The Wellbeing Room
Last October, Richmond Fellowship had a Matrix inspection; Matrix is a quality standard for employment services like ourselves, and the inspection includes the assessor meeting with staff and the people we support, and also talking to referrers and commissioners. Our Kirklees Employment Service was one of those chosen for inspection and not only did Richmond Fellowship retain the Matrix standard, but the assessor said we were ‘brilliant’.

During the course of this year, we have developed translations of some of our marketing materials into Urdu, Gujarati, Arabic and Polish. These have been distributed to appropriate community venues with the aim of making our service more accessible to people from minority ethnic groups.

Outcomes

For many people, joining Richmond Fellowship is the first step back on the road to employment related activity. Our skilled and friendly Employment Advisers support clients to identify what they want to achieve and then provide advice and guidance on how to reach their goals.

Employment Advisers are well linked in to wide networks of partner organisations, which enables them to obtain useful information about local vacancies, voluntary work or learning opportunities.

At Richmond Fellowship, we treat people as individuals, listening to their concerns, helping them to identify their strengths and re-learn problem solving skills. The opportunities we seek out are determined completely by the needs and wants of the people we work with.

Service User outcomes for this financial year consist of:

- 91 Self Improvement Courses.

Some of the self improvement course clients have attended; Creative writing, Confidence to Work, a Depression group, Relaxation classes, Art group, Coffee morning, Wood work group, Basic IT course and RF’s newsletter group.

These informal opportunities enable people to make new friends and gain confidence, have fun and develop or re-discover skills.

Richmond Fellowship has been non-judgmental and very helpful. The courses that were offered to me were relevant and helpful. I am finishing my support from Richmond Fellowship after about a year with my adviser. In that time I got a part time job that I later found wasn’t suitable. My adviser was very supportive and understanding at this time and throughout.

I am now going back into a field of work that I love full time and excited about my future.
68 Accredited Courses.

Many people want to return to education, either to develop their confidence or to enable a return to work. An example of how we support this might be going through a college prospectus with someone, or exploring opportunities for childcare.

Examples of the courses successfully completed this year are; LAB Project, Construction Skills Certification Scheme Card, Information and Communications Technology Level 1, Level 2 Peer Mentor Training, Level 2 Maths, English for Speakers of Other Languages Level 1 and Gym Instructor Level 2.

15 Work Placements.

Our Work Placements Co-ordinator provides a very high quality service to those clients who choose this option. In addition to meeting the person to find out their experience, skills and hopes, she also cold calls employers to gauge their interest, and educate them about mental health issues. She ensures that all placements set up are safe and that people are not exploited, and meets with employers and clients regularly during the 12 week placement to review progress and iron out any problems.

This year’s Work Placements included; Administration, Retail Assistant, Café Assistant, Coffee Shop Assistant and Activity Assistant in a Care Home.

Employer Feedback;

“I was introduced to a young man called Adam (pictured below) that was interested in volunteering in an admin role for the trust, after meeting with Adam it was decided the charity would take him on as a work placement for 3 months. I set Adam a specific project to do whilst he was with us, which was creating an Excel database (he needed very little guidance for this) of dance schools throughout the country, this would need accurate data input and good internet research skills. Adam was very well matched for this role and has created a fabulously detailed database, we are so impressed with Adam’s work that we are happy to keep Adam on in a volunteer capacity after his 3 month work placement finishes shortly. I found the regular meetings with Adam’s advisors were very reassuring, as if there was any issues on either side (there was none) I was confident they could be resolved quickly, I feel the charity has benefited from this experience, I also think that Adam had very much benefited from his involvement with the charity and I have seen his confidence grow greatly. I do hope the Richmond Fellowship can continue with its vital service along with its support to charities in this way.”

Sarah-Jane Ainley, Laura Crane Youth Cancer Trust
Volunteering is a great way to help others whilst helping yourself.

Volunteering helps people recover their confidence as part of their recovery journey and can give many benefits:

- Trying out a different job role
- finding out about paid work opportunities
- making friends
- feeling like you are making a positive contribution
- fun
- Improved health
- trying something new
- learning something new
- boosting CV with recent experience
- better employability

Examples of voluntary work this year; Shop Assistant, IT Support, Gym Instructor, Car Companion and Grounds Maintenance.

When I was referred to Richmond Fellowship, I was not in a good place. I was not happy in my job. This affected my confidence and self esteem and also my marriage. My adviser gave me information about a developing confidence and managing anxiety workshop which I attended. I felt relaxed and supported by everyone at Richmond Fellowship and I found this course very helpful. I enjoyed being with a group of people who had experienced the same feelings as me. When I attended these sessions, I felt like a different person and it gave me hope. My adviser helped me fill in job applications and took the time to encourage and reassure me that I would find another job. She also reminded me to use the techniques I learned in the workshop. Sometimes when I slipped into my old way of thinking, she would say “Ok, do you think that you could say that in another way?” I am now more positive, and although my confidence has increased, this is still a work in progress. I am now working part-time, in a job that I really enjoy doing. I don’t think I would be where I am today without Richmond Fellowship.

- 46 Paid Work Opportunities.

The paid work opportunities this year included; Call Handler, Adult Education Trainer, Gym Instructor, Support Worker, jobs in insurance, property maintenance and construction and many more.

Our Employment Support Coordinator works hard to develop her knowledge of the local labour market. Last year she contacted 167 employers, resulting in 15 work experience placements, plus gaining valuable information for the team about job opportunities which may not have been advertised.

An important aspect of our work is raising awareness of mental health among employers in order to tackle stigma and this can be helpful when we are supporting people to not only get a job but also to keep it.
39 people supported to Retain their job.

In addition we offer in work “Retention” support to Service Users and Employers. The focus of job retention is to enable employed people to find solutions to work-related problems, which will support them to stay well and stay working. We provide practical advice, information, guidance and support, working collaboratively with the client.

We support people to retain their employment, whether in their current role, for example through returning to work after sickness absence, or with a new employer.

Retention support includes:

- Return to work plans
- Disclosing a mental health problem
- What to do about bullying and harassment
- How to achieve a work-life balance
- Managing a mental health problem at work
- Help with looking for a new job
- One-to-one consultation
- Sign posting for legal advice if appropriate
- Liaison with employers, Union representatives and Occupational Health departments

### Annual Statistics

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<th>Year</th>
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<th>Voluntary Work</th>
<th>Accredited Courses</th>
<th>Self Improvement Courses</th>
<th>Work Placement</th>
<th>Retention</th>
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Comparison to previous years;

Finance
Expenditure at a glance
Expenditure detail

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<td>Staff Costs</td>
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<td>Other Employment Costs</td>
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<td><strong>Total Expenditure</strong></td>
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<table>
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<td>Surplus</td>
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Our income went up slightly this year as we were granted additional funds for staff training and to develop the Wellbeing room.

**Vision and targets for next year**

This coming year we are pleased to have our Confidence to Work course in the Recovery College prospectus and we hope to develop several more Peer–led activities also. We look forward to recruiting many more volunteers to provide Peer Support in the coming months.

Two Employment Advisers are due to successfully complete their QCF Level 4 in Information Advice and Guidance, which is a qualification for Careers Guidance professionals. And two people are also due to finish their Level 3 Certificate in Education and Training, which is a professional qualification for people who deliver group training. This professional learning will enable us to continue to provide the excellent quality standard which was recognised by the Matrix assessor.
We plan to promote the service to people on the autism spectrum and people with early onset dementia, to make good use of the training the staff have received. And also to market our service to people from ethnic minority communities.

Also we plan to develop our ability to provide services across a range of digital media and social media.