Case Study

Move On - 14-19 Employability Service

BACKGROUND

Move On, which was established in 1997, has developed considerable experience supporting homeless people and vulnerable young people into and towards employment. A range of successful approaches were developed including volunteering placements, accredited training, group work, mentoring support and 1:1 support and guidance. These services proved successful in moving people closer to their goals of employment, training and education. Their services are flexible, person-centred and service user-led, and they recognise that everyone’s journey along the employability pathway is different and may include dead ends and backwards steps. Their approach is to work alongside people on this journey, enabling them to take control of their own lives.

Securing Inspiring Scotland investment in 2008 enabled Move On to significantly increase the size and scope of our services for 14 – 19 year olds.

WHAT WERE THE AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE PROJECT?

The aims and objectives were straightforward, simply to move vulnerable young people into and towards employment, education and training and in the process support them to grow in confidence, gain skills and develop social networks.

WHAT HELP DID THE CLIENT RECEIVE ALONG THEIR EMPLOYABILITY JOURNEY?

While with Move On, young people were offered two opportunities; to be matched with a volunteer mentor or to be trained and supported in order to become a volunteer peer educator. These two approaches were deliberately designed to build on the good practice Move On had developed, offering an individualised 1:1 service (mentoring) and a group service (volunteering). All young people accessing the service receive 1:1 support from staff and develop a personal plan mapping out their planned employability journey. Some are matched with a volunteer mentor for up to 18 months, while others undergo our peer education group work training.
Those who became peer educators are supported to deliver interactive advice and information workshops to other young people, covering a wide range of issues. The confidence they develop as a result of their volunteering linked with the new skills they gain are a combination which has proven successful in moving people towards and into the next stage of the employability pathway. The peer educators benefit not only from the support of Move On staff, but also from the support of each other. Volunteers who had successfully moved on acted as inspiring role models for others still on that journey. For many, peer support meant the formation of positive peer networks and friendships, combating the loneliness and isolation which so many experience.

Young people matched with a mentor benefit from a stable positive relationship with an adult, who volunteers their time to be with them. This relationship, built up over time, based on mutual respect and trust, can last for up to 18 months, offering the young person consistency and a long-term commitment. Mentoring, working to mutually agree a contract and operating within clear boundaries has a clear focus on setting and achieving goals and reviewing the progress towards these. The confidence arising from being a positive and healthy relationship, together with the skills of goal setting and reviewing progress equip the young person to achieve a range of positive outcomes in their life.

**WHO WERE THE KEY ORGANISATIONS WERE INVOLVED IN THIS PROJECT?**

Move On has a huge network of partner agencies with who they work closely with. These include; volunteer mentors, Inspiring Scotland, numerous statutory and voluntary referral and partner agencies. They refer people onto Move On programmes, accept referrals from them and also deliver support complementing the services on offer. Move On is aware that in order to fully meet the needs of the young people we work with, we need to support them to access specialist services available from other agencies and support them to sustain these.

**WHAT WERE THE KEY OUTCOMES FOR THE CLIENT?**

In 2012 of the 155 young people the service worked alongside; 9 accessed employment, 69 accessed education and 13 training opportunities (59% into hard outcomes). In addition 88% evidenced an increase in confidence and 74% an increase in basic work skills.
WERE THERE ANY CHALLENGES THROUGHOUT THE PROJECT?

Being able to tap into the huge potential of the young people Move On work with is the real challenge. Unfortunately many young people believe the negative messages they receive from peers, parents, family members, professionals and others and feel they lack the skills and abilities to take charge of their own lives and achieve positive life outcomes. Supporting young people to recognise that they have skills and potential is a key part of our approach.

WAS THERE ANYTHING INNOVATIVE ABOUT THE PROJECT OR THE APPROACH USED?

Uniquely the service offers a 1:1 approach and a group approach. Move On are aware that some young people thrive in a group setting while others will struggle. Being able to offer these two different approaches enables them to meet the needs of more young people. Both of their approaches are fundamentally based on volunteering, whether this is the input of a volunteer mentor or harnessing the life experiences of young people who become peer educators.

WHAT LESSONS HAVE BEEN LEARNED FROM THE PROJECT?

Providing volunteering opportunities for young people (who are under represented among the volunteering population) and using the input of volunteer mentors delivers an effective employability approach. This approach is proven to prepare people for education, employment and training and to support their progress along the employability pathway.

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The views expressed in case study are those of the participants and are not necessarily shared by their employers or the Scottish Government

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