

### **Case Study from the Archway Foundation funded to support people suffering from loneliness**

“My Dad used to beat me up and my mum too. I was bullied at school and have never really had any friends. My community nurse introduced me to Archway and it has made such a difference to me. I knew I needed to get out and meet people but I was terrified at the thought of it. Archway has helped me so much. I don’t get so depressed now I have people to talk to and I know that others care about what happens to me”. N. 46 year old man.

“I used to be very active and sociable but since my wife died and my health has deteriorated I can’t get out unless someone takes me. Archway has been a lifeline, giving me something to look forward to each week and a chance to mix with people of all ages. I’ve been told I am good at getting some of the quieter ones to join in with conversation, so it feels great to know I’m still some use after all”. P. 79 year old man.

### **Case Study from Donnington Doorstep Family Centre funded to support vulnerable young people.**

One of the young people who regularly attend the evening drop in sessions at Donnington Doorstep is a twelve year old girl, who is kind and maintains regular, friendly interactions with both staff and other young people.

At the beginning of June she started asking staff members for help utilizing the computer for her homework. While she sometimes displayed an unknown speech impediment, staff were unaware of any potential learning (or other) difficulties. After asking for help with one particular assignment in July, it became evident to the worker that this young girl could barely read. She has clearly learned coping strategies, such as having someone read information to her from wikipedia and then copying the relevant paragraphs (though even this took her a great amount of time).

The worker asked the young girl if she received help at school for her reading, and while she sometimes had an aid, she admitted that she often copied other children’s work.

The drop in session manager followed this up with their school contact who seemed unaware of this girls low level of literacy. This young girl has completed primary school and is attending a new school this autumn, the drop in session manager is now making contact with her new school to discuss her reading difficulties and make sure the necessary support is in place when she starts but also plans to follow up by regularly reading with her.

### **Case Study from Restore & Elder Stubbs Festival**

A pianist added an air of sophistication to the tea room with his upbeat melodies from the Jazz Age. The player was previously a member of Restores Elder Stubbs recovery group and is now a volunteer and helped to organise the festival.

“Right from the outset I found it wonderful to be here, Elder Stubbs has a very helpful, natural feel about it. It’s a model for how the rest of society could be if you want to make the world a happier place.”

“I have been playing as a jazz musician for most of my adult life. Elder Stubbs gave me the strength and inspiration to get back into playing again. I’m enjoying my work more than ever now and have found a rich new vein of creativity. Coming through a mental illness can really help to focus the mind on what really matters in life.”

**Case Study from the Parasol Project who are funded to provide inclusive play & leisure activities for disabled children & young people**

(The disability can be either or a combination of Physical, Behavioural or a Learning disability)

An eleven year old girl and her two sisters were referred to Parasol by Social Services for the Easter Holiday of 2011. They were referred as an ‘at risk’ family. This young girl came with a warning that she must not be left alone with male staff – for their protection. As a group they were fine but the eleven year old was very demanding.

By May 2011 they had been taken separately into care and the placement for the eleven year old was failing because she was convinced that if she managed to get herself rejected by the foster family she would be returned to her natural Mother. Sometime earlier she had been excluded from school.

Parasol worked closely with her foster carer and each holiday excepting her into the play scheme to provide respite for the family to help the placement to continue. She was always very demanding on their female staff.

By the end of August she was diagnosed with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD). Children with this condition often cannot control their temper or behaviour. She started to receive medication for this condition and a great change was noticed in her behaviour at that time. She was calm and less demanding.

She continued to attend the play scheme and in February 2012 her foster family were applying to foster her long term and felt she had become part of the family.

She continues to attend the play scheme and it was felt that the support from Parasol helped the foster placement to succeed.

## **APPENDIX 2 continued:**

### **ADVICE CENTRE CASE STUDIES**

Debt is an increasing issue that people are seeking help with. There are a couple of ways the advice centres can help, first by helping them look realistically at their household budgets and how much they are spending. Liaising with their creditors and setting up informal repayment plans.

Another option is to apply for a Debt Relief Order (DRO).

Available from 2009, a DRO is a form of insolvency which is designed to help people who have relatively low debt (less than £15k), little surplus income and few valuable assets - and who have no realistic chance of paying off their debts within a reasonable time.

There are strict rules for applying and anyone with assets worth over £300 or a motor vehicle worth more than £1,000 would not be eligible to apply.

There are disadvantages to a DRO it will appear on your credit rating for 6 years, it may affect some people's ability to get credit in the future and they may not be able to open a bank account.

A DRO will last for a period of 12 months and during which time, any creditor named on the order cannot take any action to recover their money unless they have the courts permission. After which, the individual will be freed of the debts included in the order (unless their circumstances have significantly improved).

Certain debts such as student loans and fines cannot be written off.

DROs don't involve the courts, and are run by The Insolvency Service in partnership with debt advisers known as `approved intermediaries` - the people who actually help individuals apply to the Service for a DRO

### **Debt Case Study from Rose Hill & Donnington Advice Centre**

At RH&DAC they have been working with a woman for some years who has mental health problems. She would buy things that the family did not need or could not afford. With the help from her partner she came into the centre and asked for their help because all of her creditors kept writing to her asking for money that they could not afford to pay.

The staff talked to her about managing the family budgets better and explained how a DRO worked. This had to be explained to her a couple of times due to her mental health problems. It was also emphasised that she could not keep buying things the family did not need.

A couple of days later she came back with her partner and they agreed that the best way forward was to apply for a DRO. The centre applied on her behalf for a charity grant to help pay the cost of the DRO, which is £90. Once all the necessary paperwork had been collected they started the process on line. The next day an email was received to say that her request for a DRO had been agreed. That was nearly a year ago now and she has not been back with any further debt problems.

**Debt Case Study from Blackbird Leys Neighbourhood Support Service (Agnes Smith Advice Centre)**

A woman came to an outreach advice appointment at the Probation Centre and asked for advice on her debts. Due to deductions from her benefit for priority debts, she was experiencing hardship.

This was a very vulnerable client who had suffered long term depression and substance abuse problems which had helped lead to her offence. She was reaching the end of a two year probation order and had been receiving psychotherapy and substance abuse counselling which had helped her to conquer her addiction and improve her mental health.

Sadly her two children has been taken into care following her offence and she only saw them at weekends, but there was a possibility that they could be returned to her once she had resolved her problems.

The client saw resolving her debt issues as part of her personal progress towards a better life, as well as a practical step towards having enough money to live on.

The advisor applied to a local charity for the fee of £90 for a DRO, the grant was awarded and the application for a DRO was agreed. After 12 months she is debt free and working with social services to get her children back.

**Case Studies from Oxford Community Work Agency (includes Barton Advice Centre & Oxfordshire Welfare Rights)**

A fifty five (55) year old man was referred to Oxfordshire Welfare Rights (OWR) by Oxford CAB. He had multiple health problems and his Employment & Support Allowance (ESA) had ended because under the work capability assessment (used to decide whether you are eligible for ESA) he was found not to have limited capability for work.

His appeal against this decision was heard by the First Tier Tribunal. This was unsuccessful. OWR appealed to the Upper Tribunal. The evidence OWR produced resulted in the First Tier Tribunals decision being set aside because it was found there was an error of law. The client now has another opportunity to challenge the decision.

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A couple, both aged 75 were referred to OWR from Age UK Oxford. The couple were both in receipt of retirement pension and occupational pensions. Their capital was just above the housing & council tax benefit limit. The wife was in receipt of attendance allowance. OWR represented the husband in an appeal to the First Tier Tribunal for the refusal of the husbands attendance allowance claim.

The appeal was successful which meant that the pension credit could now include additional amounts and entitlement them to housing benefit and council tax benefit. This increased their annual income by £10,992.60.

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Oxfordshire Welfare Rights have successfully argued in four recent cases heard by the First Tier Tribunal that the migration of incapacity benefit to employment support allowance failed to comply with regulations. This meant that their incapacity benefit was reinstated pending proper application allowing their clients to remain entitled to a higher rate of benefit for longer.

## APPENDIX 2 continued

### CASE STUDIES FROM OXFORDSHIRE COMMUNITY & VOLUNTARY ACTION (OCVA)

#### **Helping a community group raise funds for kit and facilities**

An ethnic minority football team made up of young men all of whom are refugees from Sudan, meet up regularly to train and play friendly matches, often playing against Sudanese teams from other parts of the country. They enjoyed their football very much but felt held back by the fact that they couldn't afford their own kit which made them feel that they weren't a proper team.

They wanted to apply for a grant to help them buy the kit, but they didn't have a constitution or a bank account. Their captain was referred to OCVA by Refugee Resource. It took a long time to work through the process of putting together a constitution but once it was agreed and signed the team could get their own bank account, which meant they were in a position to apply for funding.

OCVA helped identify several grant-making trusts which help people develop their sporting skills. With some assistance from OCVA, their team captain applied online to the 'Telegraph Sports for You Grants'. A short time later, he found out that the team had been awarded £1,000. As he emailed OCVA, 'Isn't that fantastic news?'

#### **Asian Women's Group tackles mental health prejudice**

The co-ordinator of an Asian Women's group contacted OCVA for help in applying to a special fund from Oxfordshire PCT to raise awareness around mental health issues. The application was successful and they were awarded £5,000 to tackle the stigma of mental health in Asian communities.

The project was launched with two big events. The first was in the Rose Hill area, and was attended by over 175 women.

The second event, in East Oxford, targeted mothers-in-law and older women in the Asian community as they are often the people in an extended family who make the decisions for the household. If they are unsympathetic to a daughter-in-law suffering, for example, from postnatal depression, she will not get any support. Over 70 mother-in laws attended; five very brave women who had all suffered from depression talked about their experiences.

In the Asian community, mental health can be seen as a curse, so anyone suffering from mental health problems and their families often become isolated. Not only can this make the problem worse, but it also means that families are often not aware of the help and support available from statutory voluntary services.

The project has had a big impact with far more people in the Asian community having an understanding of the issues involved. Local GPs have reported an increase in the number of Asian women consulting them about depression. It also uncovered the need for far more work to be done in this area.

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