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Case Studies

Disclaimer:

The following case studies were provided by organisations which we have funded and names have been changed for confidentiality and data protection.

These case studies give real examples of the impact on local residents' lives and are "verbatim" in the words of the writer – as they were received.

Case Study 1:

Organisation:	Thrive, Blackbird Leys
Title:	Friday night basketball and football provision
<p>Adrian is a young person who attends the Friday evening football sessions. He's 16 and has struggled to manage his anger.</p> <p>He described himself as being angry all the time, and this got him into trouble at school. His difficulties at school came to a head, and for a whole year he was excluded from any schools. This meant he had to receive home schooling, with an inevitable impact on his socialising and social skills.</p> <p>But, having a release at the end of the week and seeing the positive role models at the football sessions have helped to make him a calmer person and better at managing his anger.</p> <p>Adrian said, "When I'm playing football, I am much calmer and I never get angry." He admitted that he still has moments when he still loses his temper, but said with a big grin on his face, "playing football is helping me stay calm."</p>	

Case Study 2

Organisation:	Parasol Project
Title:	"inclusive volunteering programme for disabled and none disabled children and young people"
<p>Many disabled people never get the opportunity to volunteer or get into paid employment. Here is an example of how Parasol is addressing this.</p> <p>A young man, with fairly complex learning difficulties, was recruited as a Role Model when he was 13 years old. The function of a Role Model is to take part in activities and be an example to others.</p> <p>When, he started, John found it very difficult to socialize and interact with his peers, often finding it much easier to speak with adults (staff). He lacked confidence in basic communication skills such as saying hello, how are you, for example, and rarely was able to use his initiative to seek out small jobs that needed to be done. This improved over time.</p> <p>At 16, he became a volunteer, and later at 19, he became a Workforce Volunteer. By this time, John was involved in many aspects of our charity including setting up spaces and organising activities.</p>	

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We have found over and over that almost every disabled/disadvantaged child/young person can do more, and take on more responsibility, than they think they can. Achieving brings about 'belief in themselves and their potential' which is exhilarating for all stakeholders.

We encouraged John to become more autonomous and proactive about what he undertook and to be more socially interactive with others. Although challenging, this gave John invaluable experiences.

Over time, John's confidence grew to the point that he successfully applied to work in a local supermarket where, a few years later, he is still happily working today.

Case Study 3

Organisation:	Oxford Community Work Agency (Barton Advice Centre)
Title:	Welfare Benefits

Mrs. C came in with a notice seeking possession as her Housing benefit had stopped. She had an overpayment letter from Employment and Support Allowance advising that she had an overpaid of over £14,000. She was further subjected to an investigation for benefit fraud. Mrs. C was vulnerable, had significant mental health issues which led to a chaotic lifestyle and was illiterate.

After extensive research, we found that there were 6 outstanding appeals against the Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) decisions, and the Secretary of State subsequently issued submissions for each of the 6 appeals. Each submission had approximately 200 pages of information including the grounds for the decisions, copies of the decisions, calculations of the overpayments and the regulations used to support them. First we had to identify the key issues by reading through all of the submissions and making comprehensive notes to refer back to. We established that the alleged overpayments were due to a combination of the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) making a decision that the client was living with a partner, had deprived herself of capital and had undeclared income.

However, we also established that the submissions were incomprehensible and the periods of overpayments and subsequent appeals did not correlate with the decision dates. We made a written submission of our findings to this effect to the Courts and Tribunals Service and attended the hearing with the client and a Presenting Officer from the DWP. Both the Tribunal Judge and the Presenting Officer agreed with our findings, they found that the decisions had not been legally valid and, therefore, that there were no overpayments. Housing Benefit was subsequently reinstated and the overpayment was found to be not recoverable. The fraud investigation was dropped and the client was able to stay in her own home.

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Case Study 4

Organisation:	Oxford Community Work Agency (Barton Advice Centre)
Title:	Debt
<p>Michael suffers with severe mental health problems and is dependent on others to help him cope. His support worker brought him to our attention as he was struggling to pay his bank. Even though Michael's income was means-tested benefits, his bank had allowed him to borrow in excess of £10,000. Michael had an issue of overspending due to his mental health problems. We helped him to place a notice with his credit reference agencies which told his creditors about the problem. This means that creditors would be reluctant to continue to lend, which helped Michael to curb his spending. His bank had acted irresponsibly in allowing the debt to reach its current level for which they have a responsibility.</p> <p>Michael was deeply upset because he could no longer continue to pay his bank; he defaulted on the accounts which were then passed to debt recovery agents. The numerous calls and letters demanding payment caused him considerable distress and this impacted on his mental health even further.</p> <p>We told the bank that Michael suffered with mental health issues and he is therefore vulnerable. The bank must take this into account when seeking to recover a debt. We obtained a 30-day hold on all recovery action and helped him to apply for a Debt Relief Order.</p> <p>Michael was able to apply for a Debt Relief Order (DRO), which is a form of insolvency, because he was able to meet the qualifying criteria: debts of less than £20,000, no more than £50 per month disposable income, assets or property valued at no more than £1,000 and not having a car worth more than £1,000. Michael had to pay a one-off fee of £90, and after 12 months of the order all his debts are written off.</p>	

Case Study 5

Organisation:	Asylum Welcome
Title:	A young girl from Sudan...
<p>A was a young woman who had travelled from Sudan with her brother, looking for refuge. She approached our office late in the afternoon crying, upset and desperate for help. After trying to reassure her that she was safe and would be looked after, she told us that she had been trafficked into the UK at about 4am and was taken to a place in Oxford. She did not know the place or the traffickers. She had been separated from her brother on the journey from France and she had feared for her life and was very distressed, but had managed to run from the place she was taken to. This was her first contact with any organisation in this country.</p> <p>Two members of staff dealt with her needs: to listen to her concerns, help reassure her and support her to feel safe and secure. We made sure she had access to food and shelter and also knew about her rights and the immigration process. We registered her request for asylum with the Home Office and obtained a time to attend her initial interview, contacted other departments at the Home Office and appealed for accommodation, which was finally agreed after two hours of intense</p>	

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communications.

She was looked after by another member of staff who stayed with her until she was transferred to the Home Office accommodation at 9:15 pm the same day. We flagged up with agencies that she was a victim of trafficking to ensure that she accessed the correct support. We kept in touch with her in the initial two weeks putting her in touch with agencies local to her new accommodation and have heard from her that all is well and she is settled and supported.

Case Study 6

Organisation:	Asylum Welcome
Title:	N is a young person...

N is a young person who came to us having been refused an extension to his leave to Remain. He had leave to appeal the decision, but no solicitor to take this forward and as he could not access legal aid funding. None of the statutory support services were able to support him with this.

We had a very tight deadline to the appeal hearing (two weeks) and we tried to find a 'direct access' barrister for court but were unable to do so at short notice.

Our Youth Support Worker and Front line Services Manager supported the young person to gather any supporting evidence with relevant agencies (school, Red Cross, ourselves) and then filed this with the court by the deadline.

We accompanied N to court and briefed him ahead of the session about what to expect, what he might be asked, and what were the relevant facts in this case. With our support he represented himself and won the appeal, being given a further two and a half years discretionary leave.