Giving employers a Helping Hand

Left to Right: Steven Blinston, Helen Cudjoe, Kiera Royal, Richard Jennings

Richmond Fellowship, a national mental health charity, works to support individuals to make recovery a reality. As part of this Kirklees Employment Service (KES) supports people in the local community in various ways to gain employment, education, training and volunteering. Another aspect of our service is to support employers with gaining, and retaining staff who are well suited to the roles they can offer, whilst supporting them, and customers, with the recruitment process and managing at work. This is really beneficial as it means customers get roles they are looking for, and employers get the right employee for them whilst being able to positively promote and support mental health in the workplace.

As part of our recruitment suppor,t recently, our employment advisers, have been working closely with Helping Hands, a local care organisation, to put customers looking for careers in healthcare into the carer roles they have been recruiting for.

Helping Hands has been running in the UK for over 30 years, and their primary aim is to help people maintain their independence and stay in the comfort of their own homes. An aspect which really draws our customers to working with them is the view the company holds that the carers are the bedrock of everything they do. This means that the company really invest in your training and career development, but of equal importance, the managers really look out for their staff and make working at Helping Hands an experience that is beneficial for all.

Our adviser, Hannah, recently had a customer who was really keen to get back into working in healthcare after a short break, but they wanted something flexible that allowed them to still take care of themselves. Hannah suggested Helping Hands as an option, and after looking through the information the customer decided she wanted to apply!

Kiera leads a training day at Helping Hands

Employer Engagement works a little differently to standard applications. Hannah contacted the managers at Helping Hands to let them know the customer was interested, and to also let them know about the customers skills and experience. This is a really beneficial process as it means we can really support customers to stand out, and the employers can get a feel for a person who we have been working with and know.

Helen and Kiera (manager and care coordinator) then arranged for a meeting with the customer that Hannah could attend as moral support, to meet and find out more.

Helping Hands Carers train with the hoist

Hannah and her customer met before the meeting to chat, and go through anything the customer was worried about but having built a relationship with Helen and Kiera, Hannah was able to reassure her customer that they were definitely looking for the best in her, and they wanted her to do well.

The meeting went well. in fact the customer was able to enrol on the day! And Hannah was able to support with liaising with Helen and Kiera to sort references and help with initial paperwork which made the process easier for everyone. The customer is now awaiting their DBS check to get started, and will continue receiving retention support from their adviser to help them settle into their new role.

Helen Cudjoe, Manager of Helping Hands, said 'Helping Hands are passionate about the care we offer our customers to maintain independence within their own home and we over the moon to be working with an established MH Employment support service within Kirklees. Working in partnership with KES means we can offer opportunities to people who want to develop their skills whilst obtaining qualifications in the care sector and also receive the employment retention support through Steve and his team. We are looking forward to developing this partnership within the near future to open up more equal opportunities within care.

KES Service Manger, Steven Blinston, said: 'Our employer engagement offer is something we are really excited about, as it is really supporting local business, along with the customers we support. It's great to liasise with organisations and support them with increasing their understanding of mental health so they can make changes in the workplace. It feels like we are really helping to remove the stigma around mental health at work, whether that be through helping find the right person for the job, or delivering our tailored workshops and support plans to the employers'.

If you are interested in having support to apply for a position with Helping Hands, would like to find out more about them, or the employer engagement process in general please do not hesitate to contact them on: 01484 501278. Alternatively you can speak with your employment adviser for support, or call KES on 01484 434866

In addition to recruitment support we also offer free, tailored support to local employers - read on to find out more!

One of the key aims of Kirklees Employment Service (KES) is to help reduce stigma around mental health in the workplace, and really help employers to understand the small steps they can take to support mental health within their company.

KES provide a tailored service to local businesses working on the Richmond Fellowship premise of Co-Production. We understand that one size is not going to fit all businesses and therefore we initially set up a meeting to discuss what the employer would like support with, what they currently do which includes looking at what currently works well for them, and where they are looking to develop. We then work with them to establish timescales, their availability, how they envision delivery of support, and how we will measure success.

By creating a support plan with the employer we can then keep a track of the work we are doing together.

There are multiple ways we can provide support, which includes:

- Delivery of our peer workshops to managers and/or staff.
- Work with managers around understanding and implementing reasonable adjustments.
- Work with managers about how to manage return to work processes and how to fully support someone returning to work.
- Work with individual staff/or groups around their wellbeing in the workplace.
- Support around managing stress at work
- Support for employees and employers around Handling Difficult Conversations in the Workplace.
- Delivering workshops or support around how to improve retention in the workplace.
- Recruitment support.
- Drop ins for staff and managers around managing mental health/employment issues/retention support and much more!

We pride ourselves on being person/business centred, so this is only a small list of what we can do. We are always happy to create new resources that fit the needs of the employer. For example, we recently worked with a local care home who wanted to focus on supporting their menopausal staff, and raising awareness of menopause in the workplace. However they wanted to do the delivery themselves. We put together an awareness package which the managers could present to their staff, and arranged check-ins with the managers before and after, so that we could support them to feel confident with the delivery.

Practicing with the hoist

We also encourage managers and employees to access our service on a 1-2-1 basis should they feel they need some additional and personal support.

In addition, for employers who perhaps want to have support between sessions, or would prefer to self-lead, we have a range of resources available on our website. These include our workshops available as downloadable formats, Wellness Recovery Employment Action Plans, retention guides, reasonable adjustment guides - and much more!.

If you are a manager who is interested in finding out more, or would like to request our support, please visit our website where you can view the offer we can make, some of the resources available, and find our enquiry form so you can request support. Follow the QR code to find out more:

We can't wait to support more local businesses in 2024!

Some of the Workshops on offer on our website

ASSERTIVENESS AND COMMUNICATION	STRESS MANAGEMENT	SELF-ESTEEM AND RESILIENCE
5 WAYS TO WELLBEING	MOOD AND FOOD	MENTAL HEALTH AT WORK AWARENESS
THE MENOPAUSE AT WORK - SUPPORTING YOUR STAFF	APPROPRIATE BEHAVIOUR AT WORK	