

Hyde Plus

News from Hyde Plus **SPRING/SUMMER 2010** www.hyde-housing.co.uk



FOCUS ON JOBS AND MONEY

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Welcome to the first Hyde Plus newsletter of 2010. This edition concentrates on Jobs Plus and Money Plus and the difference these programmes are making to people's lives.

HYDE PLUS NEWSLETTER SPRING/SUMMER 2010

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Jobs Plus supports residents to progress along a pathway to employment. Through this programme we provide 1-1 advice and guidance to people referred from Neighbourhoods or Income teams.

There are many reasons why people are not working – often to do with low confidence, caring responsibilities, poor skills or knowledge of their options. Sometimes they have a long way to go, but in some cases simply providing a work experience opportunity gives our residents the confidence they need to complete an application form and do a good job interview. Where possible we encourage people to improve their skills and qualifications – this makes it more likely they will get a better, more rewarding job.

Money Plus is about improving our residents' financial circumstances and capability. Because so many of them are surviving on very low incomes it is easy to get into debt. This is exacerbated by poor money management, use of doorstep lenders, and exclusion from mainstream financial products such as bank accounts.

We tackle the financial exclusion challenge from several angles, including debt advice to residents in arrears. This is effective in helping people reduce and manage their debt and is having a significant impact on rent arrears. Our Money Advice service is preventative and offered to new residents at an early stage in their tenancy. Our Benefits and Welfare service focuses on older people - preventing fuel poverty by reducing fuel bills and maximising benefit entitlements. Through our many credit union partners we encourage all residents to become members so that they can save and borrow – often a first step towards opening a full bank account.

As usual, if you wish to learn more about our work, or to get involved, just contact anyone from Hyde Plus and we will be more than happy to oblige.



Sarah

Sarah Thurman
Director, Hyde Plus

Achievements for the year April 2009 - March 2010

Jobs Plus		Number
Residents given employment and training support		340
Residents progressing into paid employment		53
Residents into volunteering or informal employment		83
Work experience placements		14
Residents into further learning/training/education		98
Money Plus		Number
Residents receiving our in-house Money Guidance, debt and fuel advice		600
Residents receiving advice externally (eg, from Citizens Advice Bureau)		200
Income maximisation		£264,581
Average debts reduced per person		£2,051
Residents accessing affordable credit and saving with credit unions		200
Home contents insurance take-up		100
Youth and Family Plus		Number
Holiday Play Funds awarded	41, with 2,900 young people involved in projects	
Hyde Young Pride Awards granted	313	
Employment bursaries	30	
Family and Parenting projects delivered	5, with 177 parents or carers benefitting	
Neighbourhoods Plus – regional headlines		
<p>HydeMartlet A 'time bank' is underway in Bolnore Village, with residents sharing skills, experience and interests. Harting Community Vegetable Garden has opened, helping residents to grow their own and socialise. A new cinema club has opened for young people aged 12-18 in Redhill. Our foam football project in Southampton has inspired residents' associations to try it for themselves.</p>		
<p>Hyde South East A new play park has opened for residents on the Ocean Park estate in South London. We have secured funding for a Family Intervention Worker in Kent (Swale). Recruitment is underway. Kender and Bermondsey have been helped by £25,000 of Hyde Community Chest grants in the last year. Kent Youth Service has begun weekly sessions at Leybourne Park Settling-in Centre, Maidstone.</p>		
<p>Hyde Southbank Homes Young residents enjoyed a week's personal development programme at Snow-Camp in the French Alps. The Community Lunch Group, working with the Imperial War Museum, has completed its year-long reminiscence programme, with members orally and visually recording memories and shared stories. The community resource centre is working with Stockwell Park High School to deliver adult learning.</p>		
<p>North London A Council Tax rebate on our facilities has seen us upgrade heating, lighting, alarms and cooking areas. Working with Southern and Newlon Fusion, we have taken on two youth workers at The Underground youth centre. Developing activities, they will help the centre become a key part of the community. Funding is secured to help the Packington Families Project continue for another year. A series of community events have happened over last six months, including responsible dog ownership.</p>		
External funding		
Funds levered in by Hyde Plus teams to deliver projects and services to residents: £1,020,000		

Turning down the heat on fuel bills

A Money Plus fuel poverty project for older residents in the south east has helped 96 people amass a total of £77,000 in fuel bill savings and benefit entitlements.

The service, which has been piloted since February 2009 and targets the over 65s, has so far helped 308 people with advice and support on fuel issues and benefits.

One resident, Mrs Ward, lived alone on £121 a week and was struggling to manage on a low income alongside poor health conditions including a heart-related illness, arthritis and type 2 diabetes. Miss Ward's worries about keeping her home warm and being able to pay her fuel bills caused her health to deteriorate, which led to depression. She didn't feel that she could navigate through the benefits system to increase her income. Our adviser, Donald Gordon, was able to look at her whole situation and helped by:

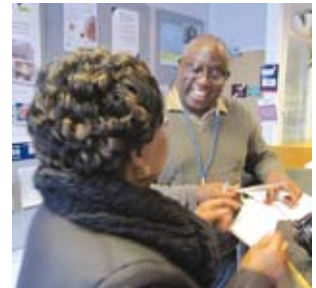
- applying for an Attendance Allowance, increasing Miss Ward's annual income by £3,640
- changing her social tariff to reduce energy and water costs by £290 a year
- working with Miss Ward to apply for adaptations to her bathroom.

The project has been a huge success, and demand for it remains high from other age groups. Money Plus has now extended this service to all Hyde residents across London and Kent.

Success generates more success!

We have gained funding from charity Scottish Power Energy People Trust to fund a similar post to Donald's for all our HydeMartlet residents.

Rachel Durrant will provide targeted support to families and young residents across Hampshire, East and West Sussex and Surrey to help alleviate fuel poverty. She will do this by assisting them to manage their money



Donald with a resident

more effectively, as well as maximising the take-up of benefits and grants. Hyde is match-funding the project to include a grants scheme to help residents reduce or clear their fuel debts and see them on a path towards financial stability.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Please contact Donald Gordon (Hyde South East) on extn 7540, or Rachel Durrant (HydeMartlet) on extn 7820.



Spot the signs of debt

Many of our residents struggle to manage on a limited income, but their situation can be stabilised if they access advice early enough. Here's what you should look out for.

- Struggling to pay rent, service charges or Council Tax
- There is always "someone else to pay"
- Need to borrow money from friends and family
- Bounced cheques or account/overdraft charges
- No savings for emergencies
- Using catalogues, store credit or doorstep lenders
- Credit cards are at maximum limit
- Late payments on most bills
- Spending more than what's coming in
- Paying for grocery shopping on credit
- Paying essential bills on credit

If you recognise any of these signs from residents you are working with, please get in touch with the Money Plus team to see how we can help - details on the back page.

Money Plus

Thousands of pounds saved for resident

The changing circumstances of residents can sometimes lead to confusion with Income Support and other benefits. The HydeMartlet Financial Inclusion Team has helped one such resident, a single mother of four, avoid more than £23,000 of incorrect benefit charges.

The resident had been claiming Income Support, Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit as a single parent after separating from her partner in 2002, but confusion with her benefits began when she went on to conceive two further children with her ex despite not formally restarting the relationship or living with him.

The customer also suffered from dyslexia and had difficulty dealing with paperwork to keep authorities informed of her circumstances. All this led the local authority and Department of Work and Pensions to believe she was

still living with her partner, and her claim for Income Support, Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit as a single parent was suspended. Our Financial Inclusion Adviser, Katie Ford, supported her successfully with her appeal to overturn these decisions.

Katie's work not only saved the resident from repaying more than £23,000, the resident was also supported to claim Child Tax Credit, Income Support, Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit, increasing her household income to £15,457 per annum.



FURTHER INFORMATION

Please contact Katie Ford on 01243 816943 or katie.ford@hydemarklet.co.uk



Encouraging residents to start saving

Beginning to save money, even a small amount, is always a good idea to suggest to residents. It helps them to plan for larger events like Christmas and holidays, as well as budget for expenses that crop up from time to time, such as school uniforms, car tax, household appliances and repairs.

Residents won't always know when expenses will arise, but having some money saved up will help them avoid getting into debt and will bring greater peace of mind.

Top tips to help residents start saving:

- We recommend credit unions as a safe and sensible place to start saving. They are ethical, locally based and offer services tailored to customers often financially excluded from other banking options. Some residents may however like to choose a bank or building society close to where they live or work.
- Anyone starting to save needs to decide on an amount that is reasonable and affordable to put away. It is worth reminding residents that even a pound or two will build up and help in the long term.
- Suggest they think about how often they want to save, eg, weekly – it's normally easier to put money aside as and when the household income comes in.
- It is always worth asking residents to check what interest they receive on their savings, and whether they can access the savings at any time. For example, some Christmas savings accounts only let you access your money from November onwards, preferred by some as it prevents the temptation to dip in sooner!

The sooner residents start saving, the more likely they will avoid borrowing money, paying interest or getting into debt. For more tips on saving, contact the Money Plus team - details on back page.



Work placements for residents at Hyde

Demand for work placements from our residents has increased. More and more are updating their skills through placements within The Hyde Group, with 14 people having undertaken work in a variety of different roles since April 2009. They've all been supported through the Jobs Plus programme and encouraged to use their placement as a springboard to gain confidence, improve their skills and to find further work and training.

"It's a great opportunity that's just ready to fall into your lap, so seize the chance"

Coming back into a working environment can be overwhelming, but many of the residents who have completed placements feel it has given them confidence. One said: "This placement has made me more determined than ever to get what I want and to send a clear message to the job centre that I want a job that enables me to train and gain new skills."

Teams have fed back, saying the residents' enthusiasm has made a real contribution. Residents have been encouraged to apply for jobs within the Group. One was recently invited for an interview at HydeMartlet and was successful in getting the job.

Get Lewisham Working

Get Lewisham Working is an exciting, free service to help unemployed Lewisham residents back into work. Aimed at those aged 16 and over, it is a unique partnership between Hyde, L&Q, Family Mosaic and Lewisham Homes and will be delivered on estates to each RSL's residents.

Financed for two years by the Working Neighbourhoods Fund through the Lewisham Strategic Partnership, the project is closely linked to Lewisham Council's worklessness objectives and will help reduce the number of local residents claiming benefits and increase the number going into work and training. Basic skills, in particular literacy, is a key area addressed. Two outreach workers have been employed and will help residents to set goals, find out more about local employment and training opportunities and get to grips with CVs, application forms and interview techniques.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Please contact Oliur Rahman, Project Co-ordinator, on extn 6203.

Residents have also learnt about how Hyde works. They have enjoyed the variety of services the organisation provides and the fact that many of the roles offer the chance to get out and about. Another said: "It's a great opportunity that's just ready to fall into your lap, so seize the chance to do it."

Olu Mosuro completed his placement with the Lewisham Support and Inclusion team. Diana Wade, who was responsible for managing him, said: "It was very rewarding having Olu on placement. The project he undertook benefited everyone and couldn't have been done without extra resources. Overseeing someone on work placement does take effort but the end result is definitely worth it."

Thank you to all staff who have devoted their time to making the work placements a positive experience for our residents. We're still receiving a large volume of enquires from residents, and are developing as many opportunities as possible, providing guidelines and support to any staff prepared to offer placement for a resident.

Pictured above is Jean Marie Tucker from Deptford, who completed her placement with the Neighbourhoods team at our Lewisham office.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Please contact Yvonne Pick, Jobs Plus Programme Manager, on extn 7666.



left to right: Sharon Stewart, Oliur Rahman, Angeline Pieters

Jobs Plus

Mentor project steers Islington residents through the maze

A new Jobs Plus project designed to bridge the gap between unemployed social housing residents and local employment support is underway in Islington.

The Islington Employment Support Mentor Project provides assessment and signposting to unemployed residents who are keen to get into work or training but don't know what steps to take or what is available to them locally, particularly as Islington has so many support services that residents are often confused about which is best for them. The year-long project is led by Hyde, working with partners Newlon Fusion, Circle 33, Southern Housing, L&Q and Family Mosaic.

Project worker Diane Taylor is based at Hyde Northside Homes but splits her time across the housing associations and at community venues. Diane has quickly established herself with key training providers and has a growing client base. She plans to expand the project by holding a range of community events bringing together residents, local agencies and setting up regular community surgeries.

FURTHER INFORMATION

For more information, or if you know an Islington resident who could benefit from the project, please contact Diane Taylor on 07918 057534.

New Directions evaluation: the results are in

We have received glowing feedback from residents using New Directions, our outreach service offering tailored jobs support to residents in their homes or venues close to them.

Our four New Directions Advisors have so far helped scores of Hampshire, Sussex, Kent and London residents into employment, work experience and training. New Directions reaches people who are not able to come to Hyde offices because of commitments or rural locations. As part of our ongoing development of the service, we regularly invite residents' feedback through evaluation forms and comments and suggestions postcards.

Of the 35 people who recently completed an evaluation form, over 90% thought the service was easy to access, made it easy to get information, gave them the help they needed and made them feel more confident to find employment or training. In addition, 100% felt that it provided a range of options to suit their varied needs and interests.

Feedback shows that there's still more to do in letting residents know about the service, so since the evaluation we have standardised our marketing materials to include Customer Services as a central contact point, developed our web pages and worked with local frontline teams to raise awareness by attending their meetings and providing training. Without frontline staff referring residents, we would not have had this much success already, so thank you and please keep it up!

100% felt it provided a range of options to suit their needs and interests.

"I'm pleased this is an outreach service. It's given me direction"

"It's really helped me develop my self confidence. I'm not scared to ask anymore"

It's a busy 2010 for the team, and you will see the following developments in the coming year:

- More community-based outreach to include training courses based on identified local need
- A review of our publicity and marketing to ensure we are reaching as many people as possible
- More work to link people with employment and training opportunities, particularly in rural areas

If you know any residents who could benefit from the service, please get in touch with your nearest New Directions Advisor - details on the back page.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Please contact Yvonne Pick, Jobs Plus Programme Manager, on extn 7666.



smart idea - Lisa Ruby

Helping residents find New Directions

New Directions Advisor Lisa Ruby has come up with an innovative way of helping residents into work - by taking on one of her clients as a volunteer to support the service in Sussex and Surrey.

Kirstin Calder, a resident from Bolnore Village, Sussex, has been on board for several months, helping Lisa to deliver employability support to residents. This has helped increase Kirstin's confidence, equipping her with the knowledge necessary to work in this field. She says: "This is a great opportunity. I am really enjoying it and am seriously thinking of changing my career path to work in an IAG role."

Hyde will sponsor Kirstin to qualify to NVQ Level 2 in Advice and Guidance, as well as providing her with a reference at the end of her appointment. Lisa says: "It's great to be able to provide someone with such a good opportunity as this, as well as having some much-needed help in the service. I recommend taking on a volunteer to all workers in this position to - it really is a win-win situation!"



at work - Emmanuel

Security for Emmanuel

Emmanuel Oyewumi is back in employment thanks to his work with New Directions. Emmanuel was referred to the service by his Income Officer after struggling with rent payments. Having lost his job as a concierge, he and his family were living on his wife's wage.

New Directions Advisor Suzanne Bingham met with Emmanuel at his home. Having been out of work for almost a year, he was frustrated with his job search, but Suzanne kept him motivated by focusing on his key skills and searching for suitable vacancies to build upon his experience.

Emmanuel successfully applied to our Jobs Plus bursary scheme to pay for his Security Industry Authority License renewal (an essential security industry requirement). After speaking with the Money Plus team, Suzanne showed Emmanuel www.entitledto.com, which enabled Emmanuel to see if he was entitled to any unclaimed benefits or financial assistance.

A regeneration contact at constructor Mace Sustain and a Hyde colleague with links to the Job Centre both told Suzanne about a security vacancy with Brookfield Developers, who wanted to recruit a local person for Strata SE1, a prestigious new 43-storey residential development.

Although in hospital at the time and unable to send his CV, Emmanuel was thrilled by the job opportunity and was pleased that Suzanne was able to submit his CV on his behalf. Six weeks later, Emmanuel had a telephone interview, and following three further interviews he was offered the role of Senior Concierge.

Emmanuel believes the support from New Directions was crucial in helping him back into work. Having someone supporting his efforts and keeping him focused, was, he says, key.

Going further

JOBS AND MONEY CONTACTS

All email addresses are Hyde format - name.surname@hyde-housing.co.uk except The Globe (external telephone)

JOBS

PROGRAMME MANAGER:
YVONNE PICK



NEW DIRECTIONS SERVICE:

Hampshire and West Sussex:

Carly Clifford 07918 726163

East Sussex and Surrey:

Lisa Ruby 07918 057269

Kent:

Jason Colyer 07918 057873

South East London: (not Greenwich)

Suzanne Bingham

020 8297 7519 07918 057325

HSH and Greenwich:

(This is run through The Globe Project)

HSH area: Ibtisam Adem 020 7346 6500

Greenwich: Mike Bowles 020 8312 5125

Hyde-based contact is David Williams
07918 057630

GET LEWISHAM WORKING

Oliur Rahman 020 8297 6203

ISLINGTON MENTOR PROJECT

Diane Taylor 07918 057534

MONEY

PROGRAMME MANAGER:
JAHANARA HUSSAIN



MONEY GUIDANCE

Across Hyde, except HydeMartlet:

Althia Cameron 020 8297 7616

HydeMartlet:

Sean Healey 01243 816974

moneyplushydemartletteam@hyde-housing.co.uk

General enquiries for London:

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HydeMartlet:

Katie Ford 01243 816943

ENERGY ADVICE

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Donald Gordon 020 8297 7540

HydeMartlet:

Rachel Durrant 023 8083 7820