



“Can Do - Will Do”

Welcome to your volunteer newsletter

2nd edition – March 2013

We have taken your suggestions for what you would like to see in your newsletter into account and hope that you find the contents interesting and useful. Your suggestions are always welcome

Claims for volunteer expenses: The deadline for submitting expenses claims for the month of March is fast approaching (5th April) so please get them in as close to the end of the month as possible. This is probably also a good time to remind everyone that expenses need to be submitted monthly.

Keeping in touch – update: previously we asked if you could let us have regular updates about your volunteering either via e-mail, phone or as a brief note when you send in your expenses. Thanks to all of you who have either kept up with this or started to do it. If you haven't already tried, give it a go...It brings what you're doing alive..

Staying in touch: Staying in touch is important—e-mail is a quick & easy way for most of us. Future copies of newsletter & other important information will be sent via e-mail to volunteers for whom we have an e-mail address. Please check you inbox (& maybe your junk mail) regularly. We will be sending a “test” mail soon—please reply to let us know that you have got it. Those of you who do not have access to e-mail don't worry we will continue to send to you via the post.

New e-mail addresses for the team: our old address will get to us for a while but we would encourage you all to start using the new addresses as soon as possible. If you have any problems please let us know.

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SYcD now on Facebook & Twitter:

Somerset You can Do now has its own Facebook and Twitter pages. They will be linked with the new website from 1st April 2013. We have created a closed facebook group this will be available to all SYcD volunteers only. We are hoping that this will be an effective way of staying in touch with you all and for you to stay in touch with each other. If you are not yet using Twitter or Facebook and/or would like some support to do so please contact us – we will try to link you up with one of our IT support volunteers.

 : @YoucanDoService

 : www.facebook.com/SomersetYoucanDoServices

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The New Service



As most of you are aware the Somerset You can Do pilot project was a great success and will continue as part of our new service. It was so successful that Somerset County Council have asked us to bring all our services under the Somerset You can do brand – the brand's redesigned logo will hopefully soon become recognised throughout Somerset.

The new Somerset You can Do Services (part of Careers South West Ltd) incorporates the next-step volunteer bureau and the Somerset You can Do pilot project together with some new areas of work to form the Integrated Community Support Service in Somerset.

There are three strands to the service.

Strand 1

An information, advice and signposting service on what support is out there in the community across Somerset.

Dedicated information line 01278 664188

Strand 2

Volunteering and Mentoring Service - actively promoting volunteering in local communities and developing volunteer roles that give support to vulnerable individuals to access their local communities for the support they need. This includes the next-step volunteer bureau and the community volunteering that was part of the SYcD pilot

Strand 3

Community development work with existing and new organisations and groups to establish, enhance or make the community support they offer more accessible for others to join in.

For the first time we will be working directly with partner organisations to deliver parts of the new service. More about this at the volunteer event

Volunteer event:
Thursday 18th April 10am – 3.30pm The Exchange, Express Park, Bristol Road, Bridgwater.

This will be a chance to:

meet the SYcD staff and volunteer team from around the County,

celebrate the project so far and

learn more about the extended service.

The day will be relaxed and as informal as possible with plenty of opportunity to network with others, find out what they are doing and talk about issues that you have faced and overcome.

After lunch we will be joined by a member of the Somerset County Council Sensory Loss team who will help us to understand how sensory loss can affect individuals and how we can develop communication strategies for engaging with them.

Volunteers!

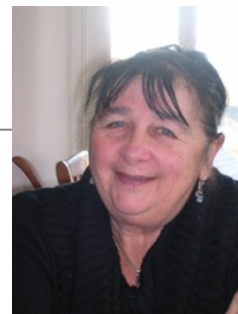


Focus on a Volunteer:

Jenny Wood, Sedgemoor

Joined SYcD as a volunteer: January 2012

Role: 1:1 support and Group co-ordinator



Jenny has been volunteering with SYcD for about 18 months. Her principle role is group co-ordinator for the Thursday group which meets at the Sydenham centre. She has been involved with this group since the start, helping with the planning, finding premises and providing on-going support to the group and its membership

As well as this, she has provided support to other groups when the need arose and also has been involved in 1:1 support work.

Before becoming a volunteer Jenny had a very varied career, working in nursing homes, rehabilitation centres and in a volunteer centre where she was responsible for promoting volunteering and recruiting volunteers.

This is the first time that she has volunteered, but no longer working she missed work and being part of a team. She realised that she had gained many skills through work, and wanted to use these to give something back to the community.

The Thursday group started in March 2012 with just 5 members and has grown steadily since then to a membership of 14. The group provides a safe space for people to socialise over coffee and biscuits and to take part in a range of activities including card games, dominoes, chess, rumicub and art and crafts. Jenny also tries to book speakers but this can be difficult when finances are tight.

Jenny has an affinity with older people and gets great pleasure from organising the group and enjoys the company.

She says, "I get a great sense of achievement when I see people arrive with a smile on their face because they are happy to be in the group and enjoy their time here. They are a great group to work with; they are good at organising themselves and are happy with the informal arrangements of a friendship group.

Jenny enjoys her time there, but adds "*it is also great to be able to leave it behind at the end of a session*".

****If you would like to feature in the next volunteer focus please get in touch.***

Customers Stories: Terry and Sonny, Sedgemoor



Terry

Terry has been involved with SYcD since July 2011. He had previously used Mount Street Day Centre until it was closed. He also attended St Mary's active living group, but was interested in seeing what else was available as well as being involved in new groups.

To begin we were able to offer 1:1 support to Terry which he found useful.

Terry has to use a motorised wheelchair to get about so any journeys have to be planned. Transport can be a problem, specially adapted taxis can be expensive even for short journeys and the Slinky service, which Terry uses a lot can't always get him to and from the places he is visiting at the times he would like.

Terry has been a member of the Thursday group at the Sydenham Centre since March 2012. Here's what Terry thinks about the group.

"I think the group is very good. It is friendly and sociable and lets me get out of the house every week. Everybody here is very welcoming and I enjoy the activities. I am playing rummicub again which I hadn't played since attending Mount Street.

I stay on to the lunch club, which I enjoy. The food is very good and the prices reasonable.

I thoroughly enjoy coming to the group."

Sonny

Sonny was among the first group of people to be referred to SYcD in June 2011. At that time he was still attending Ivy House day centre but had been informed that it was closing in the near future. He didn't want to lose touch with his friends from there.

Sonny can walk short distances with the aid of a stick but for longer distances needs to use a motorised wheelchair.

He was interested in finding out what other groups were available locally and also in the idea of being involved in a new group. It was also important to him that it was somewhere providing lunch.

Initially Sonny was supported by Tom, an SYcD volunteer who helped Sonny visit other centres, but Sonny didn't find one that he liked.

He has been involved with The Thursday group at the Sydenham Centre from the outset, where he has been able to meet up with some of his friends from Ivy House again.

Sonny says, "It has been very good. I really enjoy the company of everybody here. The group is expanding and everyone gets on very well together. We all enjoy the activities, which are growing. We have also had several speakers who were good."

What our customers have said about the support that they have received from SYcD and our volunteers:

At several volunteer network meetings you have said that you would like to hear some of the comments that the people you support have made. The following comments have been taken from the reviews that we have completed with our customers (members).

M – South Somerset:

What has worked well? ***“being allowed to take things at my pace and not rushed – totally focussed on what I want to get done – not what others think I should do”***

If you had not been part of this project what do you think you would be doing now? ***“Same as before – feeling lonely and sad. I am now feeling much more confident and not having thoughts of self-harming anymore.”***

A – Mendip:

What has worked well? ***“I got on really well with P my volunteer. It has all been quite good”***

If you had not been part of this project what do you think you would be doing now? ***I’d have been struggling to get out and meet more people. It would have taken me a lot longer to get this far.”***

M – Sedgemoor:

What has worked well? ***“ volunteer listened to me and what I wanted to do – I was very nervous but S (volunteer) put me at ease”***

If you had not been part of this project what do you think you would be doing now? ***“sitting alone in my flat – my mobility getting worse. I now go regularly to the group that S introduced me to and have met old friends there which is a real bonus. I have also joined another group and sorted my own transport!!.”***

J – Taunton Deane:

What has worked well? ***“introduced quite quickly to I (volunteer) and we hit it off straight away. He was very knowledgeable about the area and what there was that I might be interested in doing.”***

If you had not been part of this project what do you think you would be doing now? ***“same as before and getting more fed up. It did not take long for me to feel part of the group that my volunteer helped me find – I have even improved my walking by making my own way there!”***

However not everybody’s experience has been as positive

What worked well? ***“ Nothing really – volunteer only came twice then did not call or phone.”***

Further comments ***“Didn’t contact SYcD about volunteer not calling as I kept thinking she would be in touch the following week. “***

Glastonbury Bay Tree Social Club



Volunteers Sue and Les, along with one of the team joined the members of the Glastonbury Friendship Circle (Bay Tree Social Club as they like to be known) at their Christmas get together in Wells. Great fun was definitely had by all (as well as a great meal). The toast of the day was “to friends”.

The Bay Tree Social Club had their first “get together” over a year ago at the Bay Tree Café, Glastonbury. They liked it so

much that they now meet there on the last Thursday of every month. They are often in touch with each other by text and phone and meet each other when they want to go swimming, to the cinema or shopping etc. or would like some company.

Adrian, Wendy and Annie are original members from the same area of Mendip. They were wanting to improve their social lives and make new friends. Cat and Caroline have since joined the “club” and they are hoping that others will join them soon.



Your chance to talk to a careers adviser

Because we are part of Careers South West we are able to offer all SYcD volunteers the chance to have a FREE face to face session with one of our advisors, who will be able to help you look at ways of developing your volunteering or gaining extra skills and qualifications.

This will be a great opportunity to do one or more of the following :

- Find out roles that suit your skills, qualifications and interests
- Get up to date information on training and employment opportunities
- Develop a winning CV
- Help you with interview preparation, hints and tips
- Help you with applying for volunteering opportunities or jobs including online applications
- How to progress if you are already volunteering or in work and want to progress

If you interested in having a FREE face-to-face appointment which are available across Somerset, call 01823 281250 or visit the Taunton office at:

3 Mendip House, High Street, Taunton TA1 3SX

Please remember tell the advisor you're a volunteer if you call or visit.

Or if you would prefer you can always contact the SYcD team and we can make the arrangements for you.

