

Promoting Social Inclusion through employment in Continuing Care & Rehabilitation Inpatient Services: The Sweets & Treats shop

1A, Forest Close, Oughtibridge, Sheffield. S35 3JW.

Why vocational rehabilitation with this client group?

Access to vocational rehabilitation is enshrined in national Government policy (e.g. NSF- Mental Health, 1999; Mental Health & Social Exclusion report, 2005).

Regaining competitive work is the typical measure of success. However, there are also clear clinical benefits of vocational rehabilitation, such as a reduction in psychotic symptomology (Schneider & Hallam, 1997) and reduction in hospital readmission rates (Beard *et al*, 1978; Bell *et al*, 1996). Thus the aim of 'Sweets & Treats' project is to provide an employment opportunity for those with the most severe and enduring mental health problems - people who would not at this time be able to regain competitive work (and are typically excluded from other programmes) but who - we believe - should have access to these clinical benefits.

The shop was set up in July 2004. The service-users who work there are mainly continuing care & rehabilitation inpatients at Forest Close & Beighton hospital. They work 1-to-1 with a job-coach, going at their own pace to undertake a range of tasks, & are paid an hourly wage. The shop is supported and managed by an assistant psychologist and a clinical psychologist, who work with the job-coaches to ensure a calm & supportive environment in which positive interactions are promoted & modeled. A recent evaluation by Dr. Ali Davies looked at the work of the shop, using as a framework the benefits of employment defined by DOH/DWP Commissioning Guidance- Vocational Services (Feb 2006): income; social identity/status; social contacts/support; & structuring/occupying time. Content analysis was undertaken, using service-users daily records and a customer questionnaire. The findings are summarised in the table below:

Benefits	How do the service-users seem to benefit?
Social identity and status	Having an opportunity to contribute to society: Being an 'employed' person Being a good and useful citizen Caring for others
	Having access to a role that challenges negative perceptions of people with mental health problems
Social contact and support	Provision of enjoyable relationships: •Experiencing working as a team •Being in a friendly environment •Being relaxed
	Understanding social support processes: •Learning key skills •Achieving success with these skills
Income	Increased purchasing power
	Experience of receiving money as a wage- impact on self-image
Occupying & structuring time	Having a more meaningful and active day
	Learning & practicing key skills (negotiation, forward planning)
Self-efficacy & confidence	Opportunities to practice
	Being able to go at their own pace
	Experiencing mastery of tasks - impact on self-image
Motivation	Increasing resilience
	Increasing perseverance
Managing symptoms and relapse	Provides distraction and respite from difficult personal circumstances
	Learning about, & opportunities to practice, stress management techniques

What do the service-users say?

"I grow more confident and independent working at the shop. I need less support than I first did, I have more self-belief in myself to do a good job"
 "my confidence is growing in serving people and speaking to them"
 "I have achieved actually doing something not just sitting around"
 "I'm happy coming to work - it splits my week up for me & keeps me busy"
 "I achieved a finish. I did all the tasks until they were finished so the work has been done"
 "I felt confident today with things I've done - learning the till and practicing with the pricing gun"
 "I have had a good day today - I like coming to the shop. Feel calmer, like the break from the ward"



SCT Chief Executive, Kevan Taylor, making a purchase

What do the customers say?

"This is a very good idea and gives them confidence. They know what they are doing"
 "Friendly and helpful. Excellent that clients can work here"
 "There are warm vibes"
 "It has a good choice of things and is reasonably priced. The staff who work there are very good with patients from the wards"
 "Nice people. I would work there"
 "friendly and helpful behaviour of staff working with clients"
 "Surprised that patients work there - good for them".
 "A friendly local feel"
 "I would like to know how to apply to work there when I'm in hospital on a section"

Next steps

Service-users from Forest Close have also just started paid work at 'Busters', a social enterprise in Hillsborough that grinds, blends, packs & sells Fairtrade coffee- we are all excited about this new opportunity.

For more info about 'Sweets & Treats' contact Dr. Angela Carradice (Clinical Psychologist) or Emma Fagan (Shop Manager)
 For info about 'Busters' contact Michelle McNealis (Occupational Therapist)
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