

## **Case Study: Recruit Local**

People can use Direct Payments to pay people to deliver their care and support by employing a Personal Assistant to help them.

The Social Care sector has had workforce challenges due to austerity measures, the impact of Covid 19, the cost of living crisis and wider impacts including Brexit, increased demand, lack of career opportunities, low wages have reduced the Personal Assistant workforce, leaving a shortage of staff willing and able to work in these roles.

The knock-on effect of this is that often Local Authorities, Care Homes and Care Agencies compete for staff in an ever-reducing pool of people. Lack of job security, differing pay rates, external competition and possible perceptions of the role result in difficulties recruiting and retaining staff.

In 2022 the Direct Payment Support Team recognised that they had to take a different approach and developed the 'Recruit Local' approach.

One of the Direct Payment Support Team role changed to a Personal Assistant Coordinator and they were supported by a temporary team member on work placement.

### **Recruit Local**

The aim is to recruit local people to help local people in communities all across Swansea. In doing so, supporting resilient communities, taking support to people rather than the other way around, capitalising on the wealth of knowledge, expertise and support of communities.

Partnering with Local Area Coordination, Swansea Employability programmes including Workways+, the Council Communications Team, Job Centre and Swansea Council for Voluntary Services MicroEnterprise project to support the implementation.

The team work in partnership to run PA recruitment events in local community venues and these are promoted via local networks. They are used to recruit PA's and support DP recipients who want to employ a PA.

T is a young man who uses a motorised wheelchair. He actively wants to be in charge of his life, to have a say on every decision that involves him, and wants to engage fully in society.

T was not able to attend a city centre recruitment venue due to transport being a considerable issue. T attended a Recruit Local event held in Manselton Church looking for a Personal Assistant and was introduced to the DP team. T worked with the team on an advertisement for the recruitment of a Personal Assistant to support him. Even before the event finished, the advert was sent for translation so that it could be published without delay.

T's Mum said: *"The event was really well set up everyone was easy to talk to"*.

T had been trying to recruit a Personal Assistant who could drive and who could offer him more independence and opportunities for a long time.

Shortly after the event a PA was identified and introduced to T. The new PA drives T to various activities and this has opened the door to more opportunities for T.

### **On-going**

The Direct Payment Support Team will continue to work alongside Local Area Coordinators, Swansea Council for Voluntary Services, Workways+, Swansea Council Communications Team and the Job Centre in delivering 'Recruit Local' throughout the County on a continuous cycle. This includes specifically targeting areas that are identified as having particular shortages of PA's.

Perhaps some of the most important things to come out of this work is that people are talking about being a Personal Assistant, and the people who need the support of a Personal Assistant are being listened to and supported in finding the right support that they are happy with and suits them.

The potential is now realised for the creation of lasting relationships, and through this work, and partnering with MicroEnterprises, there is additional opportunity to support people within communities, to create the foundations of cyclical, reciprocal and resilient communities.

### **Impact**

*"Recruit Local enabled us to support our clients hoping to find work, to find opportunities within their local community. We were able to work closely with the team to match clients well with the current vacancies and even offer them to come down and chat face to face about the vacancies. This really enabled our clients to see the bigger picture of how amazing being a personal assistant is and breaking down any barriers or confusion into the role. Many clients on the Workways+ project applied for various vacancies being advertised on the day and some have now gone into work and no longer require our support. All because of the amazing work by the team in Recruit Local."* – **Kayleigh, Workways+ Mentor.**

*"Recruit Local gives communities a chance to speak to knowledgeable people about jobs and opportunities in their areas. For those trying to get back into work, explore new career paths or even find their first ever job. I found the team were very supportive and felt they gave everyone time, taking into consideration the needs of each and every person. Looking forward to the next one."* - **Joseph, Swansea Local Area Coordinator.**

*"Thank you, it's good to know that there are people out there interested because it has been so hard finding staff in the past. Thank you again for your help and support. You have been amazing. Warm regards"* **Nikki – DP recipient.**

*"Recruit Local is the ethos of Microenterprise. We support local people to set up services that meet the needs of their communities. The project offers guidance, information and help with start-up costs to enable them to deliver local services to local people based on need."*

*We are very fortunate to work closely with the Direct Payment Team in Swansea Council. It enables us to offer alternative forms of employment to meet their needs and more choice for individuals that need additional support.” - Roxane, SCVS*