

feat first

Issue 9 : Summer 2010

fife
employment
access
trust

journey to
work

Journey to Work

Welcome to the 9th issue of the Fife Employment Access Trust newsletter, designed to keep you up-to-date with our Journey to Work programme.

FEAT provide assistance to people who have experienced mental health problems to return to work, or take up work for the first time, through a range of supported activities. We also work closely with employers to raise awareness of mental health issues in the workplace, through travelling information displays to workshops and training. We also conduct a number of events each year aimed at the general public, again to raise awareness of mental health issues and also to challenge the stigma and dispel the myths that still surround mental illness.

This newsletter covers just some of the work we have done since

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the autumn and, as always, we welcome your comments and feedback. We now have around 800 subscribers to our e-bulletins and an equally wide circulation for our printed newsletter, so thank you all for your interest in our work.

Win a Mini and donate to FEAT!



The Annual "Great Big Small Charity Car Draw" is underway again and you can buy tickets, priced at £2 each, from <http://bit.ly/featcardraw> - select Fife Employment Access Trust as your chosen charity on the online form, and we will receive £1.90 for every ticket.

So, as well as raising funds for us, you have a chance to win a brand new

Mini First. This new model is available in hatchback only and has 1.4 litre petrol engine, but with a power output of 75 hp. The engine is mated to a six-speed manual gearbox and great "go-kart handling" is ensured by the trademark sophisticated chassis of all MINIs.

So good luck, let us know if you win!

For more details about our work visit www.journeytowork.co.uk



charity number SC022263

TIME TO CHANGE

Does admitting to an employer that you have - or have experienced - a mental health problem affect your chances of getting a job?

Brace yourself. According to a new survey commissioned for the anti-stigma group: Time to Change, of the 2,000 people asked to consider applications from a person with a mental health problem, 56% admitted they wouldn't employ the person because of their mental health problem. But why?

Stigma is the word. Although the majority of those questioned expressed sympathy towards people with mental health issues, many did not understand the conditions. The results were further broken down, with those saying they wouldn't employ someone with a mental health problem admitting; 17% thought that someone with a mental health problem would be unreliable, 15% thought they wouldn't work as well as other employees and 10% worried that the person would take more time off sick.

It's not just a question of statistics. The survey looked in-depth at individual cases. Andy Harvey, 37, worked for six years as a business analyst for a bank until he developed depression. Andy took time off from work to get better, and one year later, he tried to get back into the banking sector. It took 150 interviews before he was offered another job. Andy said: 'My experience of getting a job in the banking sector

following my depression backs up the findings of this survey. I admitted to depression on application forms and did not get interviews despite my previous experience. My mental illness set off alarm bells. My depression was a major concern in the interviews that I did get, with the interviewers worrying that I wouldn't be reliable or able to cope with stress.'

Perhaps these findings shouldn't come as a complete surprise. After all, how many of us would be prepared to admit if we were suffering from a mental health problem? Not that many of us, most likely, even to our family and friends.

and being mature, by talking openly about mental health, can we ever hope to tackle the discrimination and stigma attached to mental health problems.

If we do not learn to do this, and pretty quickly at that, we risk never progressing past the largely ignorant and fearful mindset of the present that surrounds mental health. Not only this, the economy, and the recovery, could be put at risk. That's the real world implications of not changing. With so many people being unemployed, employers might think they have a free reign to pick whoever they want for a specific role. Granted, they will have a lot of choice right now. But, in the long run, this discrimination and stigma only

time to change

let's end mental health discrimination

Sadly, this mindset of hushing up, to hold all of our progress back.

keeping quiet and avoiding the subject of mental health is a large part of the Zeitgeist (spirit of the time.) So baring all to practically a complete stranger - like a potential employer - is not something many of us would be comfortable with.

But Andy's approach was the right way to go; the way we all have to go, eventually. Only by growing up,

We all have mental health. Therefore, we all have the capacity to develop a mental health problem. Not all of us will ever have or experience a mental health problem, but anything less than reversing the current discrimination towards the subject is a failing of our society. Let's face it. It's time to change.

Now.

For more details about our work visit www.journeytowork.co.uk



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FEAT IN ACTION

What’s the longest time you have ever been unemployed? A week? A month? A year? Well, Tim Grieve was unemployed for three years before coming along to the Fife Employment Access Trust. At just 20 years old, Tim had very few qualifications, low confidence and wasn’t sure where to turn to next. This is his story.

Tim was attending the employment agency, Triage, when he saw a poster that would change his life forever; the picture showed a man felling a tree with a chainsaw. From then on, Tim knew he wanted to work with wood. Ultimately, Tim wanted to become a qualified tree surgeon. But, in order to get there,

Tim needed the skills. So, Tim began by paying for his own chainsaw license at Elmwood College in Cupar. But this first positive step was just the beginning of a long journey. When Triage referred Tim to FEAT, they stepped in to help.

One of FEAT’s highly skilled employment advisors, Graham Maxwell, helped Tim every step of the way to employment, with one on one appointments to talk about employment options and to work on important skills like filling in application forms and producing a professional CV. FEAT also bolstered Tim’s confidence by helping him go to the STARS confidence and motivation course, which included an employ-

ment workshop. Graham spotted a trainee timber processor job on the Future Jobs Initiative, which was introduced by Gordon Brown. The role was perfect for Tim. So, working together, Tim and Graham filled in an application and sent it off to Living Solutions, in Cowdenbeath.

Tim was invited for an interview. The result of all this preparation, training and advice from FEAT? A job for Tim. He was offered the post and he gratefully accepted. Tim started work for the first time in three years on May 17th, 2010.

See what FEAT can do for you by visiting digitalfeat.com or by getting in touch with one of our team.

JOIN UP NOW: VOLUNTEER!

Got some free time? Like helping folk out? Enjoy learning new things and meeting new people? Read on.

If you have a couple of hours free a week, and are looking to do something new, rewarding and fun, then the Volunteer Centre Fife could have just what you are looking for. But what exactly is volunteering? According to the VCF website, a volunteer is; someone who, unpaid and of their own free will, gives their time, energy and skills to benefit people in their community.

There are bound to be some folk who think of volunteering as simply unpaid work. But that’s just not the case. OK – you’re not getting paid money. But you do get paid in other ways.

Like gaining experience, forming relationships, helping people out and making a real difference. You know, valuable stuff.

Now, let’s look at why you should volunteer. There are many benefits to volunteering, but obviously, wanting to help out your fellow humans wherever and whenever possible is a big part of it.

But there’s way more to volunteering than doing it because it feels good. Volunteering is about gaining confidence, learning new skills, getting work references, improving your CV and gaining a

real sense of achievement. Biff McMahon, from VCF’s Give Something Back Project, says: ‘If you’re a people person, this is just the best line of work, ever. You go home at night knowing you have helped change somebody’s life. It’s amazing.’



Check out the VCF website, talk with an advisor and get started. You have nothing to lose, and everything to gain from joining up. So, why not?

For more details about our work visit www.journeytowork.co.uk



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DIGITAL FEAT : MEET THE NEW GUYS

Here's to the new guys. Digital FEAT - Fife Employment Access Trust's very own website - has just been bolstered by two new additions to the website staff.

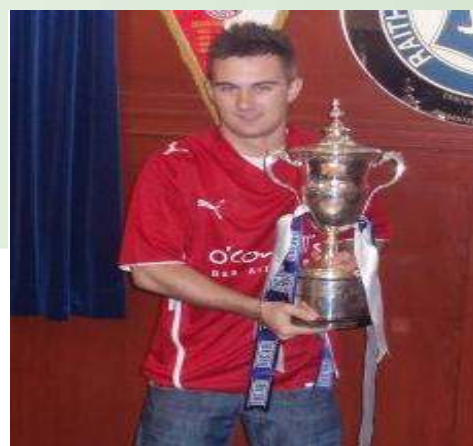
First off, meet Andrew McGregor. He's a fantastic website developer and will help keep the website bang up to date, as well as helping with promotional flyers and posters for FEAT. Andrew will also, over the coming months, help to redesign and rework Digital FEAT in a new and exciting way; all to make sure the website is doing its best to help you - the user.

The other new addition to the Digital FEAT team is David Robinson. He's an award winning journalist and will be contributing online content for the website. He will be writing news and feature articles looking at mental

health as a whole, but specifically, how it relates to employability. David will also be writing articles on other important health issues and behaviours - such as smoking and drinking - that directly relate to mental health.

With such a wealth of talent and experience on offer from the new guys, Digital FEAT looks set to have a very bright future ahead of it; with a new look, new content & a new style.

And you can comment too! After-all, this service is all about the users. So don't be shy. Sign up, log on and get commenting online. And don't forget to keep checking out the website for all the latest from the team at: www.digitalfeat.com



Andrew McGregor, website developer



David Robinson, journalist

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News in Brief

FEAT in the Park!

Not quite T-in-the-Park, but FEAT were proud to take part in the Gilvenbank Park Fun Day on 19 June. Our touchscreen display was on show and those visitors who completed our survey were entered into a free prize draw and thanks to all who took part. Pictured below are the team.



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For more details about our work visit www.journeytowork.co.uk