



Grampian**Opportunities**
Finding the way forward

Activity Report

July 2012 – 30 June 2013

Grampian Opportunities aims to promote employability develop enterprise and open up employment, volunteering and learning opportunities for disabled people and people with mental health problems.

Our approach is to support the development of relationships and encourage people to be actively involved in their community.

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Grampian Employment Opportunities

Grampian Employment Opportunities Limited (operating as Grampian Opportunities) is a company limited by guarantee (company number: SC208239) and is recognised as a charity by the Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator (charity number: SC030396). The charitable company is governed by its Memorandum and Articles of Association

History and background

Grampian Employment Trust was formed in June 2000. Two years later, the Company joined with Working Alternatives Limited (operating as Opportunities Unlimited) to form the present organisation, which was renamed Grampian Employment Opportunities Ltd. in 2003 and recognised as a Scottish Charity from 19 March 2003.

Vision

Our vision is a fully inclusive community where everyone has equality of opportunity and support to take up, retain and progress in learning, volunteering and employment.

Mission statement

Grampian Opportunities aims to promote employability, develop enterprise, and open up employment, volunteering and learning opportunities for disabled people and people with mental health problems. Our approach is to support the development of relationships and encourage people to be actively involved in their community

We recognised that not everyone is able or wants to be in paid employment but almost all want to “work” that is to be engaged in some kind of valued activity that uses their skills and facilitates social inclusion.

Area of operation

The registered office is 1 High Street, Inverurie AB51 3QA. The organisation currently focuses its activity in Aberdeenshire and Aberdeen City but can also operate in Moray.

Equality of Opportunity statement

GO is committed to promoting an environment of equality of opportunity. There is also a commitment to reducing, the stigma and disadvantage, which surrounds disability and mental health problems. We promote good practice and challenge areas where change or improvement is needed.

Management structure

A board of directors of up to eight members meet at least four times a year to administer the charity. The board has delegated the day to day operations to its Development Worker. The Directors of the charitable company are its trustees for the purpose of charity law. The Directors during the year to 30 June 2013 are listed below:

Board membership

- Alisdair Chisholm (chairperson)
- Sandy Murray
- Martin Van der Lee
- Maurice Parkin
- Alistair Law

Staff

- Linda Singer, Development worker from 1 December 2003.
- Michael Wright, Support Assistant from 31 January 2007.
- Tricia McLean, Coordinator from July 2009.
- Katrina Wilson, Coordinator from October 2009.
- Heather Morrell, Admin support from November 2009.
- Phyllis Gordon, Admin support from November 2010.
- Emma Rennie, Admin support from December 2010.
- Shona Owen, Short Break Coordinator from December 2011
- Marie Johnston, Admin support from August 2012

Support to board members and staff

The charity purchased Financial, Accounting and Administration services from Tenants First Housing Co-operative Ltd. These services were the subject of a formal Service Level Agreement that was terminated on 31 January 2013. Financial support is now provided by Coleen Murphy of Admin Services, Aberdeen.

Volunteers

Grampian Opportunities aims to fully involve disabled people and people with mental health problems in the planning, managing and delivery of our services. Opportunities exist within GO to participate as committee members, to support office activities, volunteer driving, ICT support, mentoring, coordinating events, delivering training, producing our newsletter and developing new projects.

Membership

GO membership is open to Individuals and organisations with an interest in promoting enterprise and employment opportunities for disabled people and people with mental health problems.

Current Activities (achievements and performance)

Having achieved the Scottish Mentoring Quality award in June 2012, our New Explorations Mentoring service was one of only three projects in Scotland presented with The Continuing Excellence Award at the Scottish Mentoring Network Annual Conference and Awards Ceremony in November 2012.

Towards the end of 2012, one of our mentoring coordinators achieved the ILM level 5 Diploma for Professional Management Coaches and Mentors. Impressed by her success she was nominated for, and presented with a certificate of achievement during the Scottish Learning Partnership's adult learner's week.

In November, the organisation also received a Voluntary Action Fund (VAF) Volunteering award in recognition of an Outstanding Contribution to Developing Volunteering for People with Disabilities. This led to us being awarded £1,000, and following discussions with volunteers, the funding was used to upgrade our Kitchen.

Volunteering

This year we achieved the Volunteer Friendly Award, (notified early July 2013). This award was devised by Volunteer Centre Dundee as a way to recognise and reward groups who are good at involving and supporting their volunteers. Our portfolio of evidence was prepared by a volunteer and then assessed by Volunteer Centre Aberdeenshire (VCA).

It remains our desire to find monies to put in place a volunteer coordinator. Some volunteers moved on during the year, this balanced new recruits and we recorded a total of 54 volunteers contributing to the service during 2012/13.

Employment programmes

Through our mentoring service and employment programmes, 20 people moved into or progressed in employment.

Work Club programme

Three of the participants who completed our first work club programme in June 2012, continued to meet to complete portfolios to achieve an SQA employability award.

Our follow up work club programme for ten participants was delivered between February and April 2013. Five are known to have gained employment or increased hours within their current work situation. Two have

joined our GO Dynamix group; two had made decisions on their desired career direction, we are uncertain on the outcome for the other member.

Personal Development Programme

This was a new programme we developed with a WEA trainer. Ten participants attended over ten weeks from February to April 2012, with invited speakers from the Volunteer Centre, Work Club and a self employed craft person. We developed this programme to support people look at their achievements and learn how to use a portfolio to gather evidence to support career planning and CV writing.

We did not expect this group to move onto paid work, as we viewed this as a first step towards thinking about work. Participants found this course hard but the outcomes have been surprising. Three people have now gained a level of paid employment, and one has set up a supported self employment enterprise using their admin, cleaning and craft skills. Another participant was in part time work – two days per week and has now increased this to three days (over 16 hours – and now off benefits).

GO Dynamix

Responding to an identified need we have been piloting a small group for younger people (18 – 35) to look at what they need to think about to move forward in their lives. They have identified a range of activities with a focus on lifeskills. Budgeting, planning activities and cooking are three areas they want to look at.

Employment programmes were supported by Aberdeenshire Council's Fairer Scotland Fund and the May Gurney Foundation.

Learning Opportunities

Initial finding from an service evaluations identify the areas of importance to individuals as being (1) Skill development (2) Peer Support and (3) Communication skills

This year, we supported 62 training sessions / events with 65 beneficiaries taking part giving a total of 371 activities attended (NB work club over 12 sessions counts as one activity).

Nine new mentors were trained – four within GO and five within Dad's Care. Eleven people from different organisations also signed up for an introduction to mentoring programme we delivered through the local CVS training Initiative.

Skill based mentoring, particularly on the use of computers was high on the agenda and encouraged us to recognise the value of focused skill based mentoring matches including practical skills such as first aid and driving theory. Encouraging people to recognise the skills they have and the benefits of mutual exchange has led us to explore setting up a “TimeBanking” system. This work was supported by Health Improvement funding and we have shared our learning with other organisations.

To deliver our project activity we developed a range of in house training and we have supported volunteers to participate, and as they gain confidence to take on roles as buddy, coach or mentor to someone taking part in a learning programme. We encourage people who have been on courses or programmes such as the work club to come back and talk to others about how they have benefited. Some have moved on to co-training and others have taken on lead roles in delivering training and activities.

We piloted an in-house training for trainers programme. This was followed by a Speak Up! Speak Out! Introduction to Public Speaking Workshop designed to empower and build confidence with all forms of verbal communication. To put this learning into practice we have supported people represent us at events.

We supported “Action Learning Set” (part funded through Community Planning funding) to encourage people to build the confidence they needed to get involved in speaking out at meetings and in other areas of their lives. The results from this have been encouraging, demonstrating the benefit of peer support in a group as distinct from the one-to-one mentoring.

We worked with MeAL to deliver Diversity Training and Equalities training for mentors

Learning opportunities included visits to other organisations, including the launch of Mi Enterprise Lothian. We identified that supported self-employment is an option some people (currently seven people identified) have expressed an interest to explore and we are keen to look at this and believe that individual or group mentoring would be part of the support needed.

Our work around Self-Directed Support led to a variety of learning activity and information sharing with others. The introduction of Self-Directed Support fits well with our approach of helping people look at personal goals and how they will plan to achieve these. Additional funding was identified to support this activity, which is using the mentoring and learning approaches developed for the mentoring service. A number of mentoring matches have been linked to this activity and we plan to research how self-directed support can be used to support employability.

Autism awareness training was provided for staff and volunteers.

A Health Improvement Fund grant to help us look at Health and Wellbeing support a number of group activities and taster sessions. Details about these have been gathered into a directory of activities, to help people consider activities they could benefit from. We supported two people attend training giving an Introduction to WRAP (Wellness recovery Action Planning). This will lead to an in-house programme in September 2013.

Information Project(s)

We completed our Short Break project in November 2012, responding to our target number of enquiries. This activity led to useful links with a national hotel chain, which has now installed a hoist in a hotel in Glasgow.

The Short Break project, Mentoring Service, Self-Directed Support other activities have identified the need for information to support decision making. We are working with other information providers, and a GO Connect working group has started to explore how we can best support people access, and effectively use information.

Networking

Through our project activity we have also developed working links with a range of organisations:

- "Getting There" Project - Outside the Box Support, Stepping Stones Mental Health Project, Stirling User Network and a range of other organisations e.g. Values into Action Scotland (VIAS), Scottish Personal Assistant's Employers Network (SPAEN), Scottish Union of Supported Employment (SUSE), Self Directed Support Scotland (SDSS) Mental Health Foundation, Coalition of Care and Support Providers.
- "Short Breaks Project" – Shared Care Scotland, VSA Carers Service.

Sustainability

Our main grant funding is due to end in August 2013, and future sustainability has been a real consideration this year. We recognise that the unique feature of our service is the fact that disabled people (our target beneficiaries) are the people involved in planning, managing and delivering our services. To help us build for the future, we have secured support through the DWP DPULO(Disabled People's User Led Organisation) facilitation fund. Part of this work is looking at our structure and we have set up a Business Development Working group, a Self-Directed Support Working group. We plan to have a Project Working group and a Personal Development Working group to cover the whole organisation. In June 2013, 40 people attended a planning event as part of our DPULO activity.

Grants and main sources of income (2012/13)

Grants

- **The Big Lottery** - “Investing in Communities – Life Transitions programme”. To deliver a mentoring service. (awarded four year funding from 01 September 2009)
- **Shared Care Scotland Funding** (from October 2011) – Short Break information service.
- **Wood Group** (Youth Philanthropy Initiative) – first work club 2013
- **Aberdeenshire Council, Fairer Scotland Fund** (January 2013 – March 2013) – employment support programmes
- **Scottish Community Foundation** (July 2012 – March 2013) – Strike Out project developing learning programme
- **Scottish Government Funding** (from January 2013) – to pilot learning programme and Self-Directed Support peer support activity
- **Health Improvement Fund** (July 2012 – March 2013) – Timebank pilot
- **Health Improvement Fund** (July 2012 – March 2013) – Wellbeing activity
- **Craigmyle Community Ltd** – funding for large screen monitor
- **Community Planning** – “Voices for Change” activity
- **May Gurney Award** (from April 2013) – employment support activity
- **ACORN Centre** (June 2013) iPad

Donations, Fundraising and reclaiming expenses

- **Donations:** A number of in kind donations have been received from local business and agencies, some have been used in the office or used to support volunteering activity and some passed to other voluntary sector groups.
- **Fundraising activities:** Volunteers have organised a number of fundraising activities, including a quiz at the Ashvale, This year we were

adopted as Brantano's Charity of the year and a number of local businesses donated prizes for their raffle.

- **DWP - Access to Work** support has contributed to the resources needed to enable two members of our staff to sustain employment and a healthy working life.
- **Getting There Project** – Grampian Opportunities is working with Outside the Box Development Support (OTBDS) on a Scottish Government funded project called "Getting There". We are able to reclaim agreed costs for taking part in this activity.
- **Reclaiming Expenses:** We reclaim expenses for participating in activities when there is the opportunity to do this.
- **VAF award £1000** – used to upgrade Kitchen

Services

- **Day Service support:** Day services purchased through direct payments (currently 22 sessions).
- **Portable Appliance Testing:** GO has a member of staff qualified to carry out Portable Appliance Testing (PAT) and can provide this service to small enterprises and voluntary sector groups.
- **Hobby and Wellbeing:** A charge to cover craft materials and donations for wellbeing activity adds to fundraising to support this part of our work.
- **Use of facilities:** GO provides a service to groups which make use of our office facilities for their own meetings.
- **Administration charge:** When appropriate, an 8% administration fee is added to invoices.