Innovative hub will bring community together to support disadvantaged people across Lewisham into work

Friday 14 November, 2014

Heidi Alexander, MP for Lewisham East, joined national employment, learning and skills charity, Shaw Trust, to celebrate the launch of a new service dedicated to getting the long-term unemployed back into work. Lewisham is one of the first London boroughs where Shaw Trust is piloting the new service to support some of the most vulnerable members of the local community into work.

The Community Hub was launched at Shaw Trust's office on Lewisham High Street, where the charity delivers the Work Programme – a back to work scheme supporting the long-term unemployed into work.

Shaw Trust believes that the Community Hub will play a ground breaking role in the lives of its Lewisham clients, providing them a platform to progress, find work and take control of their futures. The hub is a professional and friendly environment for the charity's volunteers, employment coaches and advisors to deliver the Work Programme in an exciting and innovative way.

Each hub operates with additional advisors and reduced caseload sizes. There are four unique areas within a hub, each one designed to build skills and confidence, and address personal issues to prepare people for employment.

These four areas include:

Wellness Hub – offering a range of health and wellbeing benefits, including healthy food, counselling sessions and access to health professionals.

Job Essential Hub – where support is available to remove employment barriers. The hub offers CV workshops and motivation sessions.

Interview Hub – advisors work with clients to improve their confidence for job interviews, develop presentation skills and provide career advice.

High Street Hub – clients benefit from complementary services, such as money advice and café facilities.

The hub will also feature English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) and Information Communications Technology (ICT) classes, self-employment workshops, occupational therapy, motivational interviewing and tailored one-to-one support.

Heidi Alexander helped to launch the Community Hub by taking part in a ribbon-cutting ceremony. The MP attended the event, along with over 50 guests, and used the celebrations to learn more about the hub and Shaw Trust's services. Shaw Trust deputy director of operations, Jon Grieg, and the charity's trustees, also attended the event.

Meeting with Shaw Trust staff and volunteers, as well as members of the local community supported at the hub, the MP was given the chance to witness first-hand how the centre helps people from Lewisham into work.

Heidi Alexander, MP for Lewisham East, said: "It's a real pleasure to be at the launch of Shaw Trust's new Community Hub in Lewisham. Ensuring that everyone has the right support and skills to get back to work sounds as if it should be easy but it's often not. I'm pleased that Shaw Trust are now providing a range of services in the heart of our community – giving people the chance to build their confidence, address health issues which may be holding them back, whilst at the same time developing the essential skills which are needed in the workplace. We all know that simply helping someone with their CV often isn't enough – we need a more comprehensive approach and I hope the new Community Hub in Lewisham will provide that."

Roy O'Shaughnessy, chief executive of Shaw Trust, added:

"Our Community Hub in Lewisham is delivering a new and innovative service to support unemployed people back into work. Shaw Trust believes that a holistic approach is the best way to support our clients to realise their talents, gain new skills and get a foot on the job ladder. The hub will not just offer

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traditional employment support, interview training and CV writing, the team will also help clients overcome health and motivation issues. We are increasing the number of advisors at each centre so they can spend more time with our clients and offer a more bespoke service. Lewisham's Community Hub will help the people we support to get into work with life-changing guidance to help them start a new life off benefits and in work."

ENDS

Notes to editors:

Please find some photographs attached with the following captions:

"Heidi Alexander celebrates the launch of Shaw Trust's Lewisham Community Hub"

"Heidi Alexander attends the launch of charity's new Community Hub in Lewisham"

"Shaw Trust launches Lewisham Community Hub"

For media enquiries please contact Leke Sanusi on 07825 512 264 or pressoffice@shaw-trust.org.uk

About Shaw Trust:

Shaw Trust is a national employment, learning and skills charity that helps people facing disadvantage into work, gain skills and take control of their futures. Over the past thirty years, the Trust has striven to combine its charitable heart with its commercial brain to provide the very best support to the people it was set up to serve.

Shaw Trust is the largest third sector contractor for Department for Work and Pensions. We deliver both mainstream (Work Programme) and specialist (Work Choice) employment support schemes across Britain and help over 50,000 people per year. As well as being a subcontractor in six contract package areas, Shaw Trust, through its merger with Careers Development Group (CDG) is a prime provider in London East has now supported 9,170 people into long-term jobs since the Work Programme began, ranking 9th out of 40 contracts nationally for Year 3.

With regards to Work Choice, Shaw Trust is a prime provider of 16 Work Choice contracts, and a subcontractor in seven Work Choice contract package areas. The latest official statistics from August 2014 show that nationally 74,440 people have started the programme since it started in 2010, with 26,660 of these having found a job. Shaw Trust has supported 16,410 people into work, representing 37% of the people starting on the programme.

The Trust also helps people gain skills and into work via a wide range of other activities including education and skills contracts, 50 shops and a national volunteering programme as well as health and social enterprise projects.

Shaw Trust, an approved academy sponsor, created Shaw Education Trust, a multi-academy trust, to manage and run the academies - serving young people with special educational needs or those in disadvantaged communities.

Shaw Trust has a turnover of over £107m a year and employs over 1,438 people across over 200-plus locations. We are supported by over 600 volunteers and deliver contracts for eight major funding agencies including the European Social Fund, the Department of Work and Pensions and the Big Lottery Fund. It has a range of international partners in Australia (Interwork), Poland (Intergracja Foundation) and Romania (Motivation Romania).

Watch the latest Shaw Trust corporate video showcasing who we are and what we do here: http://www.shaw-trust.org.uk/about-us/corporate-video/. For more information, please visit the Shaw Trust website: http://www.shaw-trust.org.uk

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