



Building Better Opportunities: Getting Cumbria to Work (BBO GCtW)



November/December 2020 Newsletter

Good News for the Project

Good news is always welcomed and especially so as we approach the end of this tough, challenging and difficult year! As lead partner on the Building Better Opportunities; Getting Cumbria to Work (BBO GCtW) project, here at Cumbria CVS we are pleased to share that the European Social Fund (ESF) and the National Lottery Community Fund (TNLCF), in response to the surge in unemployment resulting from the pandemic, have provided Emergency Funding for six months for all BBO projects due to close before October 2021 to enable them to continue to deliver these projects, which tackle the root causes of poverty, promote social inclusion and increase 'job readiness'.

This is most welcome news for Cumbria CVS and the BBO GCtW partnership and means we will continue to deliver tailored support in Barrow-in Furness and the South Lakes.

As we approach the close of 2020 and reflect back over the past year, I am left with a strong feeling of gratitude, respect and absolute admiration for the whole BBO GCtW partnership staff team- Cumbria CVS, Cadas, The Well Communities, Women's Communities Matters and R2W, who have continued to deliver much needed interventions to our participants with dedication and passion whilst circumnavigating some tough working and personal conditions – not least home working whilst taking care of and educating children at the start of the pandemic, caring for elderly parents and relatives, meetings being interrupted by internet issues and belligerent cats and dogs as well as managing their own mental health and resilience. They have worked together to ensure that the most vulnerable of communities know they are cared for, valued and do not have to face the challenges brought on by Covid-19 alone. Amazing!

Dare I say it?... Bring it on 2021- we are ready for you!

**Natalia Wealleans-Turner
BBO GCtW Project Manager**

BBO Project Activities

This event was organised on Zoom in collaboration with the Cumbria Learning and Skills Team at Kendal.

R2W contacted some current and past participants who would like to join in and a date/time was agreed for 14/12/2020 between 10 am and 12 noon.

The Learning and Skills team provided a list of items needed and we (R2W) sourced the items including jam jars, ribbon, candles, pine cones, PVA glue and other crafty items and also prepared some festive treats for the participants which included hot chocolate mix, mini Christmas cake and chocolate snowballs all packed into individual bags. These were all distributed to the participants on 11/12/2020 ready for the event.

Everyone received a Zoom invitation and took part on the day. Attached are some photos of the Zoom screen showing the participants and some of the craft items they made. The event was very therapeutic and everyone who took part enjoyed the activity. The Learning and Skills team made it very enjoyable and easy going and put everyone at their ease. At the end of the event we asked the participants for some feedback both on the event as well as the BBO GCtW programme and received some excellent feedback.

Maria Appleton
Right2Work



Examples of the lovely
items produced at the R2W
craft activity



BBO GCtW Success Stories

A Syrian refugee who has now settled in Barrow has described how grateful she is to the Building Better Opportunities Getting Cumbria to Work (BBO GCtW) project for the help it has given to her.



Faten Almregawe, 31, has been given support and funding to help her take a hairdressing course at Furness College. Faten arrived in Barrow 18 months ago with her husband, Mahmoud, and her two children. They were resettled in the United Kingdom after spending time in Jordan.

She was introduced to the BBO GCtW project through a contact at Furness Refugee Support Group in the town.

“The project said they would prepare me to be ready for a job and that was very good for me”

“They helped me and they are very nice people,”

“I just want to thank them for everything they did for me and my family”

The project’s contracted Specialist Support Arabic speaker Ramy Hassan, who works for UK Opportunities Centre, undertook some one-to-ones with Faten and translated documents for her when required. Ramy helped her feel more comfortable with the culture of the United Kingdom

“I can ask Ramy about any things I cannot understand”

Faten said she had started a hair and beauty course at Furness College but it was felt she was not on the correct level because she had already done some hair and beauty training in Jordan. The project helped to negotiate with the college so that she was moved to a higher level of course.

Faten needed a uniform for the course – because she is a Muslim it needed to have long sleeves with a hijab – and BBO GCtW provided the necessary funding to buy it. Faten also wanted to feel more assured with the English language and the project is providing a tutor for her to improve her knowledge of English.

“The project said they would prepare me to be ready for a job and that was very good for me”

Faten said her plan for the future was to work for someone else to gain experience and, ultimately, to have her own hairdressing salon.

She said she was grateful for the help provided by BBO GCtW.

“They helped me and they are very nice people,” she said. “I just want to thank them for everything they did for me and my family.”

BBO GCtW Success Stories...

A Walney woman has described how the Building Better Opportunities Getting Cumbria to Work project has helped her better understand herself and feel more positive and confident.

In 2016 Rachel Craig, 38, was a trainee Assistant Practitioner (AP) in a care home and studying for her AP qualification at the University of Cumbria. But she said she was struggling to concentrate and focus and became increasingly unwell, without really understanding what was happening to her. In summer 2020 she was diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder and Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD). It was one of the BBO GCtW's key workers who helped her recognise how these affected her and how she interacted with the world around her.



“My work contract ended in December 2019 and I started claiming Universal Credit”

“I became quite isolated and very depressed – I felt I had lost everything. I had become quite inward and my organisational ability had gone”

“I got my diagnosis in July this year. And then I became a participant in the BBO GCtW project and started having sessions with BBO GCtW Specialist Support Provider, Ali Barnes”

That input has made a huge difference to her life. Ali, who is an Autism Practitioner from Autus Cumbria, a non-profit organisation, which helps to support people with autism and their families, helped Rachel with some of the ongoing exploration of her autism.

The BBO GCtW project funded a consultation with Autus Cumbria, which subsequently helped Rachel develop strategies to manage her autism by focusing on her sensory awareness and helped her to feel more ‘grounded’ by using ideas such as carrying a weighted rucksack or using lists to create routines and help with her organisation.

The project has also paid for a further 20 one to one sessions to help Rachel negotiate some of the changes in her life and implement some of the coping strategies suggested in her consultation.

“Associated with Autism Spectrum Disorder is sensory processing disorder”

“There are certain environments which I cannot tolerate, such as crowded places, but in the past I did not realise why. I used to beat myself up about becoming so anxious”

“Ali has helped me understand that my nervous system is wired differently. She has helped validate these difficulties so I can become more accepting of them”

The project is helping her with some practical skills to reduce barriers to her regaining employment. Rachel's dream job would be an advocate for autistic people, perhaps working for a charity, initially as a volunteer and then in a paid position.

Ali said: ***“Now we have provided the scaffolding for the autism and ADHD, I am working with Rachel on her job searching skills and to help her develop strong support networks to reduce the social isolation she feels at times – developing her CV, looking for suitable volunteering placements to build her confidence and, ultimately, hopefully helping her find her dream role”***

Rachel added: ***“Ali has also facilitated for me to go, possibly in January, to a community project on Walney, where I can learn to be more self-sufficient and sustainable by growing my own vegetables”***

What difference has BBO GcTW made to Rachel's life?

“I feel positive and I can see progress,” she said. “I know I am not on my own – I have got a hand helping me, someone who will stick with me and say ‘We’ll get through this together’.

“Ali is helping me become my authentic self and helping me find techniques to manage better.

“The project is about building better opportunities and that is exactly what it has done - and is doing - with me. Because of an invisible disability I missed out on opportunities so now they are building better opportunities for me.”



BBO GcTW Success Stories Continued...

A Kendal man who was made redundant and was struggling to find another job has praised the Building Better Opportunities Getting Cumbria to Work (BBO GcTW) project for changing his life.

Former chef Edward Wilkinson is now happily employed in the warehouse at Lakeland in Kendal.

Eddie, 58, was a chef for more than 40 years, working in the hospitality sector in Windermere and Ambleside, but was made redundant in January 2020. For the next five months he applied for numerous jobs but without success.

“It was a worrying and anxious time”

“I had applied for around 30 to 40 jobs. It is soul destroying when sometimes you don’t even get an email to acknowledge your application.”

Then the Job Centre referred him to the BBO GcTW project and he met one of its key workers, Maria Appleton, who works for one of the project's partners, the community interest group Right2Work. (continued over)

“BBO GCtW helped me to rewrite my curriculum vitae, in particular highlighting the skills I had that were transferrable”

“They also helped me write an adaptable covering letter, taught me how to apply for jobs online and helped me with interview skills, including the best way to put myself across at interviews. Hospitality, like many industries, is a small world and throughout my working life I had always been approached about job opportunities. I had never had to do formal interviews so my interview skills were non-existent”



BBO GCtW paid for Eddie to take an online food and hygiene course to renew his certificate. Then Maria Appleton suggested he might want to look at different courses and mentioned that Lakeland, which is based at Windermere and has a chain of kitchenware stores in the United Kingdom, was looking for staff for its warehouse at Kendal.

“I did an online warehouse course over about a month and knew that passing the course guaranteed me an interview with Lakeland”

After completing the course, he was invited to an induction day at Lakeland and was told that the company had seen from his CV that he had the kind of skills it was looking for, such as reliability.

“In June Lakeland offered me a job working in the warehouse at Kendal, packing boxes for distribution to customers and to some of their stores”

“I work 30 hours a week, on either a morning or afternoon shift, and am really enjoying it. There is, of course, some pressure to ensure you get items out within a certain time but it is nothing like the pressure of cooking. I don’t have the same levels of responsibility I had as a head chef, such as dealing with orders and staff rotas. I feel so much better in myself and so much more relaxed. Basically, it has changed my life”

Eddie said he would recommend the BBO GCtW project to anyone who was long-term unemployed.

“I was over the moon with what the BBO GCtW project did for me. I could not see any light at the end of the tunnel and I thought that, potentially, I would be on Universal Credit for years”

However, as a result of the project I have a job I really like and hopefully the future is going to be bright.”

Well done to everyone involved in achieving these fantastic outcomes and what a great way to head positively into the New Year

Taking Care of Your Mental Health During the Festive Season

During these difficult months many people have struggled with loneliness and isolation, please remember there are people out there who you can talk to, the following are telephone/text helpline contacts:

Samaritans 116 123

Whatever problems you are facing Samaritans are there to listen 24/7

SHOUT Text Shout to 85258

Crisis text service for support with any mental health concern 24/7

MindLine Cumbria – 0300 561 0000 text Mind to 81066

Information, guidance and support. Midday-11pm Mon-Fri. 5-11pm Weekends.

Lancs and South Cumbria Mental Health Helpline: 0800 915 4640

24/7 Mental Health and wellbeing helpline for Lancashire and South Cumbria

Lancs and South Cumbria Mental Health Textline: text HELLO to 07860 022846

Mental Health and Wellbeing textline for Lancs and South Cumbria Mon-Fri 7pm-11pm, Sat/Sun 12pm-12am

CALM Campaign Against Living Miserably 0800 58 58 58

Helpline for men of all ages 5pm – Midnight.

Silverline 0800 470 80 90

Information, friendship and advice for older people 24/7

Young Minds Parent Line 0808 802 5544

Advice for parents and carers worried about a young person 9.30-4pm Mon-Fri.

Young Minds Crisis Messenger Text YM to 85258

Crisis text support for under 25s 24/7

Papyrus Hopeline 0800 068 4141

Support and advice for Young People. 9am-10pm Mon-Fri. 2-10pm Weekends.

The Mix 0808 808 4994

Advice and support for under 25s 4-11pm

Childline 0800 11 11

Support currently available from 9am-Midnight and on line 1-2-1 chat

Also, speak to your GP and tell them that you would like help. Tell them how you are feeling and they can refer you to First Steps (you can also refer yourself to First Steps). Having this professional help can help you to develop different strategies to keep you safe and help you become happy.

Access to Work have a Mental Health Team - they can help in 2 ways both personally and by speaking to the employer or actually provide a support worker in the workplace to ease the person into the sometimes daunting new work environment, this is their link:

<https://www.remploy.co.uk/employers/mental-health-and-wellbeing/workplace-mental-health-support-service-employers>

Every Life Matters have a really helpful website, this is their link:

<https://www.every-life-matters.org.uk/get-help/#mh-telephone>

BBO GCtW Partners

Christmas opening hours/contact information:

- Cumbria Alcohol and Drug Advisory Service (CADAS)

www.cadas.co.uk

Cadas (Kendal and Barrow) – Closes 6pm 18th December, reopens Monday 4th January, 9am

- The Well Communities

www.thewellcommunities.co.uk

Monday 21st December	- 9am - 4pm
Tuesday 22nd December	- 9am - 4pm
Wednesday 23rd December	- 9am - 4pm
Thursday 24th December	- 9am - 4pm
CHRISTMAS DAY	- CLOSED
BOXING DAY	- CLOSED
BANK HOLIDAY MONDAY 28 th	- CLOSED
Tuesday 29th December	- 9am - 4pm
Wednesday 30th December	- 9am - 4pm
Thursday 31st December	- 9am - 4pm
NEW YEARS DAY	- CLOSED
Monday 4th January	- 9am - 4pm

- Women's Community Matters

www.womenscommunitymatters.org

Reception Opening Times:

Monday 21 st December	- 9.30am - 1pm
Tuesday 22 nd December	- 9.30am - 1pm
Wednesday 23 rd December	- 9.30am - 1pm
Thursday 24 th December	- CLOSED
Friday 25 th December	- CLOSED
Monday 28 th December	- CLOSED
Tuesday 29 th December	- 9.30am - 1pm
Wednesday 30 th December	- 9.30am - 1pm
Thursday 31 st December	- CLOSED
Friday 1 st January	- CLOSED
Monday 4 th January	- reception CLOSED

- Right2Work

www.right2work.org.uk

Monday 21st December	- 9am - 4pm
Tuesday 22nd December	- 9am - 4pm
Wednesday 23rd December	- 9am - 4pm
Thursday 24th December	- 9am - 4pm

Close Christmas eve and reopen Monday 4th January 2021, 9 am



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