

# Making an impact

2019/2020



Possability  
People

Ensuring disabled people can live independently, with dignity and without prejudice

Our Vision: A society where anything is possible regardless of ability

Our Mission: Ensuring disabled people can live independently, with dignity and without prejudice



### Foreword by Maddy Hamp, Chair of Trustees.

Disabled people have the absolute right to live independently, with dignity and without prejudice. Possability People works tirelessly in every way achievable to make this statement more of a reality, not just in Brighton and Hove but increasingly across Sussex and beyond.

Whether our work alleviates what can seem like unsurmountable crises, whether it provides a strong and supporting environment in which people can develop personally and professionally or direct, practical help to disabled people or people who live with long term health conditions it has, over the last year, made a huge difference to the lives of thousands of people.

However, there has been little time to reflect on the achievements of the last year as we, like the rest of the world were plunged into the greatest crisis of our lifetimes. Covid-19 has tested our staff and volunteers, who have risen to its many challenges.

We are an organisation which is fleet of foot, and were able to swiftly reorganise all of our services and systems so that we can continue to operate flexibly and with innovative approaches. The team has, as always, responded brilliantly, adapting to the ongoing challenges and going over and above the call of duty to make sure our beneficiaries are supported and receive services during a time when they need them more than ever.

It is likely Covid-19 will change the world significantly, but I am confident that Possability People is well placed to keep dealing with the challenges it presents, and continue to provide accessible, relevant and timely projects and services the entire team can be very proud of.

Maddy

Over the year, The Advice Centre handled 4386 enquiries and supported 1275 people

### The Advice Centre

Possability People's Advice Centre is often the first port of call for disabled people trying to sort out problems. Over the year, it handled 4386 enquiries and supported 1275 people, despite a challenging cut to its funding.

A great deal of the work the team does supports people applying for the benefits they are entitled to. For each person we help, the relief is plain to see, but we should remember the knock on effect on the local economy too. Disabled people spend their allowance on the day to day support they need, which reduces pressure on health services because they are better supported to manage their health conditions or impairments.

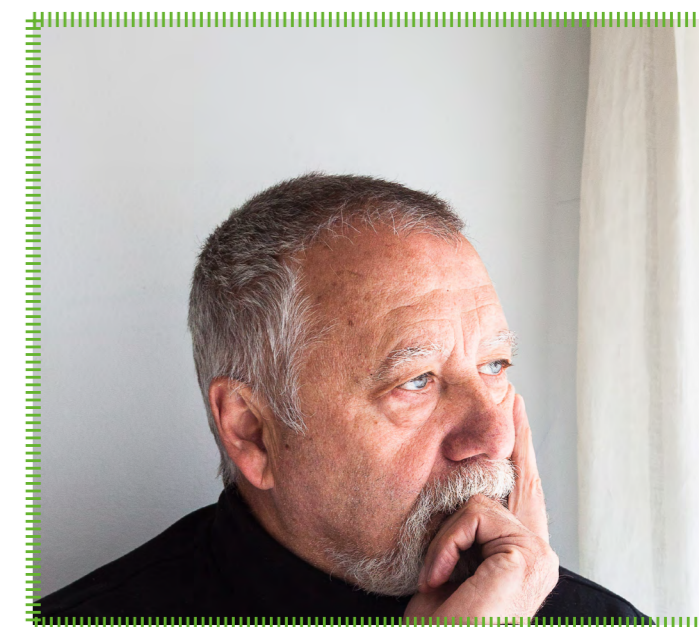
The Advice Centre has an 88% success rate with form filling and at appeals – above the national average – our team are experts.

A grant from The Henry Smith Foundation enabled the Advice Centre to develop peer support programmes, including a buddy service to accompany disabled people to their benefit tribunal hearing. A thorough recruitment and training programme later and nine clients were supported by a buddy to at tribunal. All of them were successful.

### Advice Centre Story



Gee\* contacted the Advice Centre for help with an appeal against a "limited capability for work" decision. His health conditions affect his mobility, walking ability and causes chronic pain. An auto-immune condition affects his



gastric system, often resulting in malnutrition and weight loss. Becoming unable to work led to a deterioration in their mental health and they were diagnosed with "emotional intensity disorder."

Gee claimed Universal Credit and requested a Work Capability Assessment. They provided medical evidence in support. They were examined by a health care professional who believed they didn't meet the criteria for Limited Capability for Work.

Possability People supported Gee to appeal, contacted their GP for additional medical evidence and met with them to prepare for the appeal.

One of our tribunal buddies went to the tribunal hearing with Gee, which found in their favour. A huge relief which would make a world of difference to Gee's wellbeing.

\* We have changed the names of the people features in our stories to protect thier identity. Photo credit: barbsimages/Shutterstock

The Community Employment Service supported 168 people last year. It enabled 40 disabled people to move into work and 56 to begin volunteering.

## Community Employment Service

Our Community Employment Service supports disabled people thinking about or looking for work. We ran our Get Set programme in Hastings and launched it in Surrey (Guildford, Woking, Camberley, Redhill, Epsom, Staines and Weybridge). Get Set has made life changing differences for the people it has moved towards employment.

Last year, we supported 168 people. We delivered 4600 contact sessions, either by providing 1:1 support or in group workshops and courses. We enabled 40 disabled people to move into work and 56 to begin volunteering.

Our Get Set programmes impact on disabled people in lots of different ways. From feeling confident and ready to find work, to being prepared with the right skills. From feeling confident about managing their health condition in their workplace, to feeling more connected to a community. From feeling confident about what to do in an interview to having better digital and IT skills.

## At Work

At Work was a pilot project funded by the Work & Health Unit Challenge Fund to find out more about supporting people with MSK (musculoskeletal) conditions at risk of unemployment to keep their jobs.

The project helped people living with MSK conditions to have a clearer understating of the impact of their symptoms. The people taking part developed personalised coping strategies, condition management and self-management

toolkits. Participants learned how to make adjustments to their working environments, better manage their health in work and seek Access to Work funding. We worked with employers and Occupational Health teams, looked at return to work planning and coached participants for conversations where they told their colleagues about their conditions.

This service demonstrated that an effective brokerage service between an employee and employer can achieve high rates of job retention and sustainability for people with MSK conditions, at a reasonable cost.

- 95% of our beneficiaries remained in employment
- 75% overall reduction in sickness absence rates
- 100% reported greater confidence in disclosing their health impairment in employment
- 100% reported greater confidence in talking to their employer about their health impairment
- 100% reported greater confidence in self-managing their health in work
- 100% reported that they had greater confidence and skills to manage their health in work
- 100% said reasonable adjustments that were put in place were effective.
- 100% stated they had greater confidence in sustaining employment in the long term.

"I felt like I was running down a hill and couldn't stop".



## At Work Story



Ess\* has Fibromyalgia and worked as a Healthcare Assistant in an NHS Outpatients Department. When she joined At Work she had a fit note because of a broken ankle. This was her second such break - her previous return to work had been organised too quickly. She was struggling with early starts and found it hard to establish a routine where she got enough rest between shifts. Coupled with that, 'brain fog' made focus and concentration difficult.

Ess had not discussed the full impact of her condition with her line manager or told them about her mental health difficulties which were starting to resurface while on sick leave. Her financial and housing situation had become precarious, she was socially isolated and had problems leaving home on her own because of anxiety about being in public places. She was also at risk of malnutrition.

We helped Ess to create a Wellness Action Plan, acknowledging all the situations which triggered poor physical and mental health and the support needed to mitigate these. We explored reasonable adjustments needed at work as well as those Ess could make outside of work.

Photo credit: Juice Flair/Shutterstock

Ess planned her own phased return to work with recommendations made by her clinician. We accompanied her to Occupational Health and 'back to work' meetings which gave her the confidence to disclose her mental health difficulties fully. Occupational Health found our suggestion of an acclimatisation phase helpful as this wouldn't have previously been considered.

## The Get Involved Group

Our user-led engagement group, the Get Involved Group (GIG), provides a platform for people with a lived experience of disability to have their voice heard on issues that directly affect them. Its members identify issues and help plan improvements to services and accessibility across Brighton & Hove for the benefit of everyone.

We are commissioned to facilitate the Brighton and Sussex University Hospitals NHS Trust Patient/Service User Disability Group meetings. We also engage with disabled people on behalf of private organisations, including Brighton & Hove Bus Company and Uber. This consultancy activity enables disabled people to have their voices heard directly by people designing and delivering the services they access.

Through the year, we engaged with 578 disabled people on a range of topics including self-managing long term health conditions, NHS Urgent Care, Out of Hospital Support and Current and Future Care Needs. We also ran "open space" meetings and socials to enable disabled people to come together and talk about the things that matter to them, rather than continually canvassing them for their opinions.

Deep cleaning • emergency food parcels • locksmiths • furniture • electrical work • gas works • plumbing • pest removal • transport • animal boarding • building repairs and adaptations • laundry services

## Link Back and Early Response

Our Link Back service supports vulnerable patients over 55 who are leaving the Royal Sussex County Hospital (RSCH) or Intermediate Care Unit. The service provides improved links between acute based health and social care staff and the community and voluntary sector. It's Early Response Service arranges practical support so people can come home from hospital swiftly and safely. Such support includes deep cleaning, emergency food parcels, locksmith services, new furniture, electrical work, gas works and plumbing, pest removal, support with transportation, support for animal boarding while work is being done to the home, buildings repairs and adaptations and laundry services.

This year Link Back received 480 referrals and made 336 onward referrals.

114 delayed transfers of care have been achieved through the early response support, with an estimated 114 hospital bed days saved. This is equal to a saving of £45,600 (based on average one day per patient saving costing the hospital around £400).

The Early Response Service is flexible and responsive so that people with complex support needs can leave hospital as quickly as possible.

Hospital Discharge Social Worker: "...the patient was medically ready for discharge, and I explained... moving was a lengthy process that could not happen from the hospital. I called in Link Back... within no time at all the patient was supported into new privately rented accommodation whilst they wait for their sheltered housing application to be processed".

\* We have changed the names of the people features in our stories to protect thier identity. Photo credit: evrymnt/Shutterstock

## Early Response Story



82 year old Bee\* was referred to our Early Response Service after a fall and a trip to A&E. The paramedic team had shared concerns that Bee was neglecting herself very badly.

We assessed Bee's home, which needed a deep clean and flea extermination. A Hospital Discharge Grant was organised to pay for the work. Bee was concerned about her cat but we assured her it would be looked after and arranged for the pet to be boarded. Bee admitted her mental health had been deteriorating; she was overwhelmed and felt hopeless as a result of her situation at home.

With the cat safely boarded, a deep clean of her home, two flea treatments, removal of condemned white goods and laundering of her bedding and clothing was completed. A referral for extended support once she returned home was made.

Bee returned to a clean, safe home, with less risk of more falls. Because the service acted so swiftly, she spent less time in hospital and is now more confident living independently in her home.



## Right Track

Right Track supports people with social prescribing alongside their clinical treatment for musculoskeletal conditions. We work closely with our funders, Sussex MSK Partnership, and receive most of our referrals from clinicians such as physiotherapists or occupational therapists.

Last year, Right Track supported 305 people across Brighton & Hove and Mid-Sussex until the service began winding down in January. A newly commissioned service started in March.

## Right Track Story



Kay's\* rheumatologist referred her to us with multiple health conditions, including inflammatory polyarthritis, sciatica, osteoporosis, joint problems, damaged vertebrae and swollen nerves. Because of her overwhelming pain and becoming less active, Kay's mental health was also deteriorating.

"I wasn't confident enough to go to many groups but just chatting on the phone with you gave me the confidence to start swimming with my daughter".

A keen gym member who spent much time out and about with family Kay had to pace herself throughout the day until painkillers took effect in the late afternoon. This limited her activity a great deal, although some pain management techniques were enabling her to do small tasks around the house.

We supported Kay to improve strength, posture and flexibility. Our action plan included gentle health classes and a community gardening scheme to improve her physical health and help her reconnect with her community. Information on other community services, including support to understand and make benefit entitlements was also shared with her.

Kay said: "I wasn't confident enough to go to many groups but just chatting on the phone with you gave me the confidence to start swimming with my daughter".

Kay is now more active again and has found a love of swimming, going every week to exercise and spend time together with family. We have provided additional information about memberships to pool to reduce the cost for them.



\* We have changed the names of the people features in our stories to protect thier identity. Photo credit: Rido/Shutterstock

At Home took on 25 new clients (double last year's), growing the service from 26 clients to 55.

It increased the hours of care provided to 13,309 over the year (up by 3386 on the previous financial year).

## Possability People: At Home

Possability People: At Home enables disabled people to stay independent and safe at home. It is registered with the Care Quality Commission, and provides support, care or help for disabled people in their homes and to get out and about in the community. Our bespoke service works to understand every beneficiary, their needs, preferences and aspirations then designs a care package to meet those needs.

Currently, it supports people across Brighton & Hove, East and West Sussex. Personal budgets and direct payments give people a chance to choose, employ and organise their own support (usually personal assistants). But sometimes the idea of being an employer can be off putting. That's where the At Home service comes in, providing support in the way people choose, without the burden of being an employer themselves.

That might mean providing personal care, or sometimes it's about someone to help with the housework, gardening or dog walking. They enable their beneficiaries to get out and about to social appointments, or to get ready for work in time each morning.

They also support people with more complex needs who require dedicated care around the clock.

Over the year, the service has taken on 25 new clients (more than double the amount the previous year), growing the service from 26 clients to 55. It increased the hours of care provided to 13,309 over the year (up by 3386 on the previous financial year).



### At Home Story

Possability People have supported wheelchair user Marcus since October 2019. He remembers the date because that's the day his life changed. "The company that used to provide care went into administration, so there was a lot of trouble for me, and I didn't have any carers whatsoever," he said.

"I was without carers for a little while. But I had my family, my parents, my sons, and emergency care who all came in. Until Possability People, who are like my knights in shining armour". Marcus is a Senior Contact Centre Executive for a warranty company. One of the difficulties he experienced in the past was organising support at the right time to enable him to be in work on time.

626 disabled people use our Payroll and Supported Bank Account service.

Our mobility equipment was hired out 623 times.

25 organisations hired our accessible venue in central Brighton.

## Possability Place

Our accessible venue, Possability Place is an ideal training and meeting space for our staff but also an asset hired out to the community so other groups have an accessible venue for their beneficiaries. This year, the venue was hired by 19 organisations and groups for regular events, as well as six others who wanted to host one-off meetings.

## Shopmobility

Our fleet of mobility scooters and wheelchairs are available to hire across Brighton & Hove. This year, there were 623 hires of our equipment, across a total of 301 disabled people.

Local disabled people rely on the service to get out and about, as do disabled visitors to the city who do not need to transport their equipment when travelling on holiday. 91% of hirers rated their experience as good or excellent.

"One of the problems was I work. Previous times were inappropriate for me because I need to get to work by a certain time. It didn't go particularly well for a few weeks until Possability People came in and they agreed to the times that I needed." He continues "It enabled me to get to work on time and also to go to bed at a reasonable time. Not too early, because obviously when you work, you don't want to come home and go straight to bed. See, that's not nice. [The team] sorted out the times of my PAs."

As well as providing support to Marcus to live independently, we have helped in other ways, fixing things around the home to make life easier. We have organised things like hoists and kitchen equipment with lowered surfaces so that Marcus can cook and use the kitchen. Marcus' PAs are happy to be flexible and work to suit his needs. Sometimes he will request calls to be earlier or later, only occasionally, but this allows him to live life the way he chooses.

## Payroll and Supported Bank Accounts

Our Payroll and Supported Bank Account services support disabled people by alleviating the financial burden of managing direct payments, HMRC requirements for employing care staff and so on. It is a service many disabled people describe as being essential to having the choice and independence they desire.

This year, the team have supported a total of 626 disabled people.



Advice Centre 01273 894050

Community Employment Service 01273  
894044

Get Involved Group 07712 524892

Link Back 07795 905740

Right Track 07458 305256

At Home 01273 89 40 70

Payroll & Supported Bank Accounts 01273  
894060

Possability Place 01273 894040

Shopmobility 01273 323239

Possability People's work is supported by a range of funders. It has also received donations from a great many generous people, who have given up their time and energy to raise funds for us.

We extend our sincere and grateful thanks to all of them, especially staff and volunteer teams from The Advice Centre and Get Set, and also to Leah, who spent a year fundraising for us in her community.

If you would like to support our work, you can do so by visiting  
[www.possabilitypeople.org.uk/donate](http://www.possabilitypeople.org.uk/donate)

Possability People Limited (limited by guarantee)

Charity number 1114435

Company number 05706441

## Registered office & Principal address

Montague House  
Somerset Street  
Brighton  
East Sussex  
BN2 1JE

Telephone: 01273 894040

Textphone: 07718 424214

Email: [hello@possabilitypeople.org.uk](mailto:hello@possabilitypeople.org.uk)

[www.possabilitypeople.org.uk](http://www.possabilitypeople.org.uk)

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