

News Matters

Summer 2023

Independence
Matters

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INSIDE:

Customers are the stars
of our new Hub branding

Welcome to News Matters

Hello everyone and welcome to the Summer edition of News Matters.

I do not think we have been bringing you News Matters for quite 10 years, but I always enjoy reading it and completing my intro piece. It is so heart-warming to read all the wonderful things happening with our customers and colleagues and there is so much to shout about and celebrate together.

What an amazing journey we have had, and I have enjoyed every minute of it and feel very proud of all that we have achieved. It's always a collaborative effort, with colleagues, customers, families and volunteers working together to make a difference. We also have lots of fun along the way 😊

The new branding looks fantastic. We are all about people and making stories and memories and pictures really do tell a thousand words. I am so pleased for Amie, Susan and Rachel in their new homes, living the life they choose. Having your own front door is so important.

This edition is packed with great articles and loads of pictures. The future feels bright, so, let's hope that the sun comes out and shines for us all as we enjoy the last weeks of summer.

I can't wait to see the 10-year anniversary special



Sarah Stock, Managing Director



We celebrate our tenth anniversary

2023 marks ten years since Independence Matters was formed as an independent social enterprise having spun out from Norfolk County Council's support services.

We've come a long way in that time, faced a few challenges, and eaten a lot of cake. We're bigger, thanks to the acquisition of our colleagues at Home Support Matters (not the cake), and we've come through the worst pandemic in 100 years. We certainly didn't see that coming back in 2013!

Whilst we'll continue to evolve and adapt in a constantly changing world, we've celebrated our anniversary in a very traditional way with summer fetes at our larger hubs and smaller get-togethers across all our services taking place in July. Look out for the special anniversary editions of News Matters coming out soon!



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Hello to new branding in our Community Hubs

New branding that celebrates our customers is being installed at our Dereham, Great Yarmouth, Attleborough, Holt and Sprowston Hubs. Following our photoshoots, each Hub will feature their own customers on their walls. Local stakeholder groups were asked to agree the wording to go alongside the images, which describes how they feel about coming to their Hub.

Some of you have been surprised to see so many different colours on display. We can confirm this is definitely 'on brand'! The new look makes use of our 'secondary' colour palette and shows that we're not just all about magenta!



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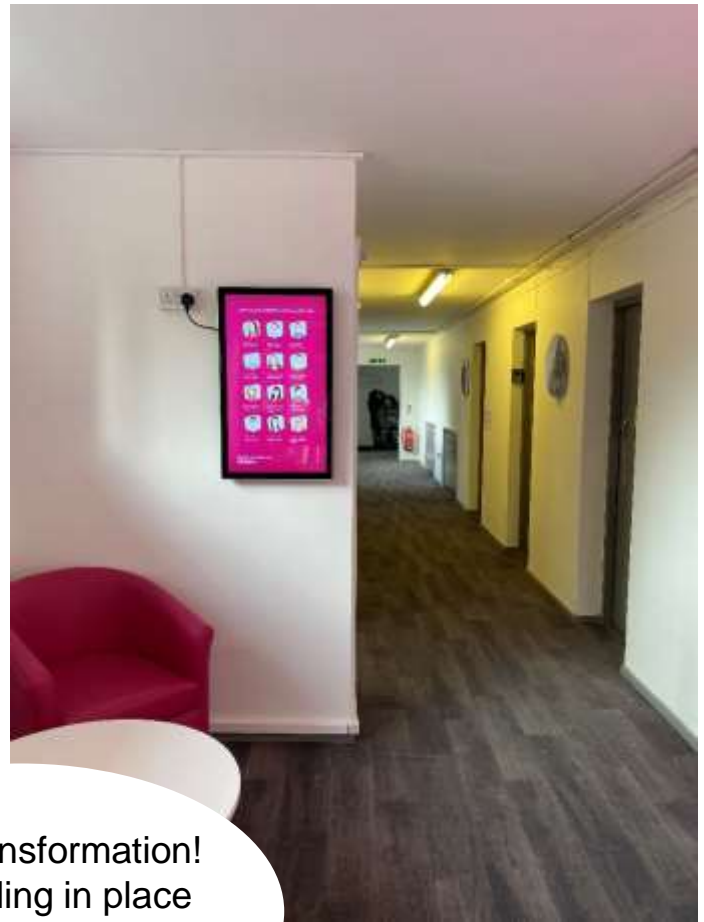


Customers are loving the branding that's gone in at our Great Yarmouth Hub.



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What a transformation!
The branding in place
at Rosewood and
Great Yarmouth Hubs



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The newly installed branding in place at Attleborough Hub



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Photos of colleagues are now displayed on digital screens in reception areas



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Congratulations Chris!

A huge well done to Chris, a Norwich Supported Living customer, who has successfully completed the BUILD Charity's Booster Programme.

The programme provides learning in life skills including digital, staying safe, planning and budgeting, and health and wellbeing.

Chris, along with seven others, attended a Graduation Ceremony at The Assembly House in Norwich, and was presented with a certificate of achievement by the Deputy Lord Lieutenant of Norfolk, Mr Michael Harrowven DL.



I'm 10

Celebrating 10 years of
Independence Matters



Big thank you to Savoy Catering Supplies

Massive thanks to Savoy Catering Supplies, Great Yarmouth, for their kind and generous support for our 10th anniversary fete at Suffolk Road.

The company are supplying us with burgers, sausages, and rolls for the BBQ at a special price.

They also sent Shaun and Rachel away with a trolley of goodies, donated free of charge, to support the event. They said: "At the end of the day, it's all about giving back and making a difference, and Independence Matters is doing just that!"

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New contract with major UK pet wholesaler

We're delighted that Norfolk Industries has secured a valuable new contract with trade-only supplier Bestpets.

It's our first contract with a major wholesaler and we're delighted that they'll be stocking our own, Norfolk Industries branded, products – helping to raise our profile in the market place and with smaller retailers across the UK.

It's also good news for our workers at the factory. The new contract includes a range of production lines which creates more work opportunities for both our employees and the people on our work placements.

The contract requires us to supply mixed pallets of product which is something new for us. A picking and packing area has been set up in the factory to deal with this, providing new work tasks that can be used to support people's training and development.



STOP PRESS! We have secured another new wholesaler contract with trade specialists **Vital Pet Products** who have a massive online presence. They will be stocking the NIDP-branded products too, so a great and sizable contract to have!



New product gets NIDP's own-brand packaging

Bestpets were keen for us to supply them with our Cloth Bedding which, up until now, had only ever been supplied to a couple of our customers under their own packaging.

We saw this as a great opportunity to get another NIDP-branded product into the market, so we went ahead and as you can see (above) the product is now up and running on the production line.

Youth Pledge Presentation

The Youth Pledge for Employers is a council-run project that engages with small local companies to offer work inspiration, experience or employment opportunities to 16 to 24 year olds.

General Manager, Sharon, was invited to their recent meeting at Carrow Park, Norwich to talk about the work done by Norfolk Industries.

She said: "There were many interesting stories from people involved in the circus, IT and other careers. An enjoyable afternoon for everyone involved!"

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Amie's delight at her new home

Amie has been staying at Church Green Lodge on and off for the last few years. We have loved having her but are super pleased that she has at last found her own home!

She visited her new home ahead of the move and got in some practice changing her bed and trying out the gadgets in the kitchen. Colleague Carly said: "The photos say it all, she is very excited!"

To say goodbye, Amie invited friends and colleagues to join her for a drink at the pub.



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A new beginning for Susan

Susan moved to our King's Lynn Supported Living just before Christmas 2022. Although a little daunting at first, the change in environment has been a catalyst for positive change and she is now experiencing a renewed sense of happiness and contentment.

Shortly after moving she discovered that an old friend lived nearby which brought comfort and familiarity to her in her new surroundings and played a key part in helping her adjust to life in her new home.

Susan has made her room her own and has all her things around her. She is also very active socially and has joined the local church for both services and social groups such as Singing Kettle. She has made friends within the congregation and is often picked up or dropped off to activities by ladies from her church. She loves knitting and is part of a knit and natter group at the town library, and loves eating out with friends, her favourite meal is scampi and chips.



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Susan's infectious personality, warm smile, and zest for life, make her a source of inspiration to others and it is a pleasure to support her.

Andrew Rose, Colleague, King's Lynn Supported Living

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Dementia Awareness Week Events



In May, Independence Matters held two 'specialist dementia carer's events' at Harford Hill and Rosewood Hubs to mark 'Dementia Awareness Week'.

Dementia UK, Alzheimer's Society and Admiral Nurses came and gave a talk on 'managing behaviours associated with dementia'.

Carers benefitted from the support, help and advice that they had on the day, and they shared personal experiences with one another which helped people to know that 'we are all in this together'.



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Colleague congrats!

Team managers **Lena Armstrong** at PAS South and **Macala Overton** at Holt Community Hub, have each passed their level 5 and achieved their Leader in Adult Care Diploma.

Another great achievement for our Line Management team. It also makes Macala one of 8 managers in the business to have a Level 5 qualification, and we have 7 more who are still studying. We also have 4 of our new team managers about to embark on the Level 4 Lead Practitioner in Adult Care Diploma, all adding to the growth and skills of our management team.

Holt colleague **Gloria Woods** has also been celebrating having reached an amazing 20 years with us, and in IM's 10th anniversary year!



Hub's shop opens

Dereham Community Hub's shop is now officially open. Run by customers, it sells a selection of seasonal veg and plants, craft items, kindling and made to order products such as bird boxes.

Located just inside the entrance, the shop is open weekdays from 9am - 3pm. Give it a visit if you're in the area, they'd love to see you.



Fish & Chip Day

We seem to be a bit late to the party here! Evidence of culinary enjoyment at Crossroads Community Hub to celebrate National Fish and Chip Day.

A great excuse to tuck in and discuss the headlines.



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Summer update from our wildlife bloggers

Hello everyone, the TAPS wildlife team here with more updates and wildlife news.

It's been a good year for fledglings at the hub. We watched babies from our two blue tit nests start to fly and one even paid us a visit in our TAPS room. He had a fly around and was a bit lost, so we opened the high windows, and he found his way out and back to his mum.

We've also had great tit fledglings, as well as blackbirds, dunnocks and the most exciting bird of all, a baby oystercatcher (see photo top right). You may remember we have regular visits from the oystercatchers each year. They are a wader bird found in coastal and wetlands areas, but during the past 50 years they've started to breed inland. They eat mussels and cockles on the coast but like many birds enjoy worms inland. They lay between one and four eggs and are ground nesting, so this very cute little baby must have been born at the hub. We're guessing he's around 3 weeks old but not big enough yet to fly. They fledge at around 33 days so hopefully we'll see more of him/her.

Some other exciting news is that we are now able to go out to visit places to birdwatch. We visited Sculthorpe Hawk and Owl Trust where we saw a lot of new species that the group hadn't encountered before, including little egrets, lapwings and reed buntings. We were lucky with the weather and had a great day finished off with a picnic where we were joined by a feathery friend.



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We followed this with a visit to Titchwell marshes which was also a lovely day. The first bird to greet us was a large grey heron, looking around for his breakfast. We watched marsh harriers hunting the marshes and the group got to see the emblem of the RSPB - the avocet.

As well as the birds, Tim spotted the very beautiful Chinese water deer (top right). We watched in anticipation, willing her to come closer but she wasn't brave enough.

We also saw some dragonflies fluttering around. Both these trips have opened a new world of birds for the group, and we have already got more trips planned to Cley & Salthouse marshes, Welney wetlands and Pensthorpe. So, who knows who might join us there.

We all enjoy looking for wildlife and birds when we are out and about with family and friends. Claire got to see the spectacular swallowtail butterfly at Hickling Broad. Predominantly a Norfolk species, they are the largest UK butterfly and very beautiful. She's shared one of her photos below.



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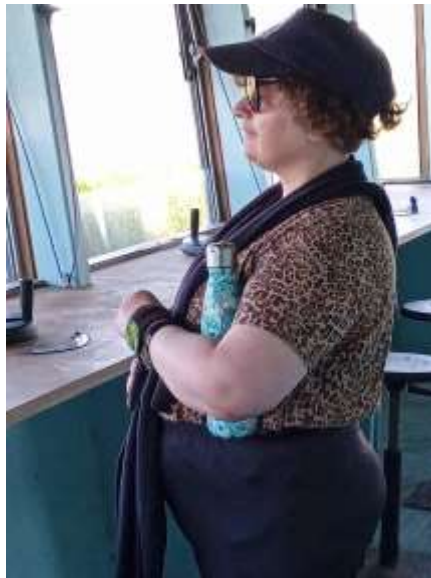
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Now the weather is good we also go on weekly insect hunts around the hub grounds then take photos and ID them on return through the Seek app.

Well, that's nearly it from us this time. we hope you enjoyed watching Springwatch this year from RSPB Arne. It was pretty dramatic and sad at times though, but that's nature for you.

On a final note, we've learned that the bee eaters are back at Trimmingham, proving the experts wrong, who said they never usually return to the same nest site twice. It's lovely to see but on the other hand a worry that our summers are getting too hot, a sign of climate change.

Well until next time, keep watching wildlife - Norfolk is one of the best places for it. As usual, help if you can. Happy hunting, Claire, Helen, Tim, Stephen, Justin, Lucie, Mark and Jasmine



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We celebrate the Coronation!



Many of our services celebrated ahead of the King's Coronation on 6th May. **Ipswich Road Community Hub** held an afternoon tea that featured bunting and decorations made by customers, lots of dressing up and themed games - including pin the crown on King Charles III.



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William Day Centre held an afternoon tea party that was enjoyed by everyone and included games with opposing teams named Crowns and Tiaras.



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Holt Community Hub held a wonderfully regal event (check out that carriage and those ears!!). We're loving how everyone dressed in red, white and blue including an amazing union flag dress.



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Zoe's learning's a big success

I wanted to learn to read to improve myself and be able to do more on my own. I found a reading programme at the library:

<https://www.norfolk.gov.uk/libraries-local-history-and-archives/libraries/visit/norfolk-reading-pathway>

I could feel my confidence grow as I worked through the programme's booklet with my tutor Anne. We get on well and she makes me feel good about myself.

I was so excited to receive my certificate from Anne and hear what Anne had to say...



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This was a special day for both my learner and me. I think I was as thrilled as she was to arrive at the final page of Yes, We Can Read. I am so proud of her achievement!

I have loved working with my learner over the course of this year, watching her confidence grow week on week as each small step added to the building blocks of reading. Our reading together will continue, and I was delighted when my learner wanted to take home a library book this week. She has the reading bug! Volunteering as a reading coach has been such a rewarding experience.

”

I wanted to keep learning and reading, I asked Anne to find books for me to read with her and continue to see her once a week to read together. I use my new reading skills every day, I love to chair the Working Together group meetings. Reading the agenda makes we feel very proud of what I have achieved.

My computer skills are getting much better now I can read what I am doing. I got myself a smart phone, I WhatsApp family and friends all the time and find it easy to read what they are telling me. I have so much freedom to keep in touch with everyone on my own.

With my newfound confidence I have joined an adult learning maths support course which aims to help people find work and manage money better.

I would highly recommend anyone have a go, I learnt so much and feel so good about myself, I have made friends and love my newfound independence.

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Rachel finds her purr-fect home!

Just a few months ago, Rachel was living in a first floor flat with her elderly cat, Smudge.

Rachel wasn't happy living there as she felt lonely and didn't like the stairs. All of which was made worse, when very sadly Smudge became ill and had to put to sleep.

With the support of our King's Lynn Supported Living team, Rachel was able to find a more suitable place to live - and get some happiness back into her life.

Her new ground floor flat is warden controlled and has communal space where people who live there meet up regularly to socialise and play bingo.

We also assisted Rachel in finding another feline companion, Barney, who is a rescue cat from the RSPCA. Colleagues went with her to pick him up and he has also settled in well. As you can see from her pictures, Rachel is very happy with her new home and furry companion!



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Daisy's Café is back!

After a successful inspection Dereham Community Hub is pleased to announce the re-opening of Daisy's Café after its shutdown during Covid. Selling a selection of hot sandwiches and food three times a week to colleagues and customers, the Café is once again very popular with Tuesday's egg and bacon one of the top sellers.



Customers very much enjoy working there, choosing what to make and sell, creating posters, buying the ingredients, cooking and serving. The whole process includes a variety of skills which can be put through the Gateway Assured programme, including money management and customer service amongst others.



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Enjoying the summer

On Monday 3rd and Thursday 6th July customers from Great Yarmouth Community Hub enjoyed trips on The Queen of the Broads. They boarded the boat at Wroxham and really enjoyed themselves.



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On The Move partnership audit visits

We've been taking part in Active Norfolk's 'On the Move' project where people with learning disabilities visit different leisure facilities to see what they have to offer and carry out accessibility audits.

The TAPS visited Dereham Town Football Club on 21st June where three very helpful football students gave them a tour of the ground and club and organised some fun training games, including a penalty shootout.

Helpful and enthusiastic they were interested in providing more football training sessions, either at the club or at the hub. We were also offered free season tickets for hub members to watch Dereham in the coming season, which we plan to take them up on!

Everyone really enjoyed the visit, especially one Helen Palmer who is a long-term supporter and fan of Dereham Town FC and goes to watch their home games on the bus independently during the season. It was a very successful trip with a lot of possibilities for us and we hope this will be a beneficial, positive contact for the future.



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The group also visited Mattishall Golf Club where they got to take part in minigolf and try out the golf simulator.

After the activities everyone grabbed a drink in the café and chatted through what was good about the facilities and what they felt could be improved. Justin was able to enjoy a half of beer in the café, so he had a brilliant day!

Feedback from the audits is fed back to each venue and put on the Active Norfolk website.

The visits also link with our Gateway Assured learning programme, which now has modules covering accessibility audits - so everyone who took part will get a certificate. That's a win win!



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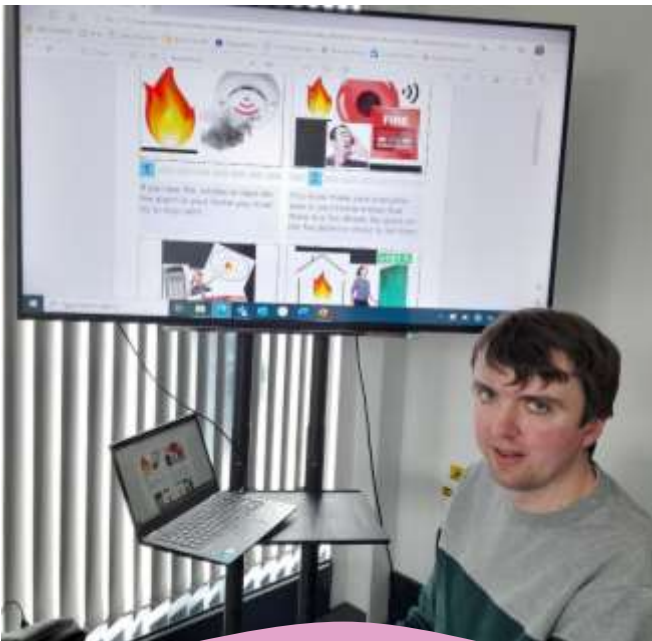
News

from our Stakeholder Groups



Stakeholder groups have been working exceptionally hard over the past few months and have really felt valued and empowered by having their views heard. Groups have grown in confidence and developed new skills along the way. Most importantly, people are having fun!

Groups have worked on some complex and challenging topics making things easier to understand by using photos and plain text. Some great improvements have been made and people have received some positive feedback about their work. Brilliant!



Ben (left) and **Vincent** (right) did a superb job in the Norwich Stakeholder meeting by reading out the text in this co-produced easy read document about 'what to do if there is a fire'.



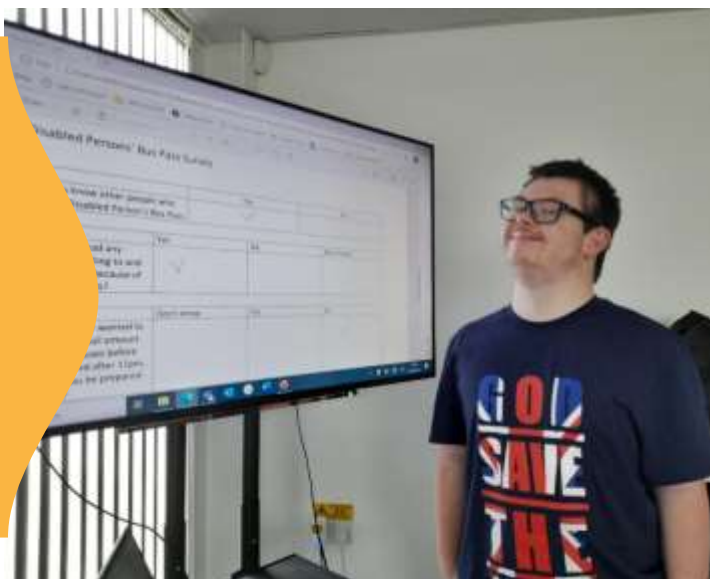
Vincent gave ideas on what 'Photosymbols' we could use so that people who don't read can follow the form. The whole group worked on this, and it is now used in all services across Independence Matters.

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Stakeholder groups across Independence Matters were asked by 'The Assist Trust' if we could help them get some information about the difficulties people have using their bus passes to get to and from services and leisure activities.

Joseph helped The Assist Trust by filling in his survey and sending it back.



George is an active member of the Norwich stakeholder board and often runs the meetings and takes notes.

George supports other members of the group by using his experience and describes things in a clear way.

George gives feedback on easy read documents and makes good suggestions, thank you George.

Massimo has been training new colleagues in the 'Company Induction' and has been telling people about co-production including all the work that stakeholders do.

We all give Massimo a 'thumbs up' for learning how to connect to a Microsoft Teams meeting independently and for presenting to large groups of people, that's a massive achievement!



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Zoe, alongside other customers, volunteered their time to support the interview process for the new Head of Service posts. Zoe asked her own questions and was keen to know how new colleagues would support people who are deaf.

After the interviews Zoe completed an easy read feedback form which was then given to the formal panel to decide on who should get the jobs.

Zoe said that "I felt nervous at first, but I got more confident after a little while, I enjoyed it". Zoe was proud of what she did and has offered to interview again in the future. Thank you, Zoe!



New Community Hubs Handbook goes online

The latest of our new services handbooks covers our Learning Disability Community Hubs. It contains detailed information about what you can expect from our services and is now available to [view/download from our website](#).



New DRAWING COMPETITION
for customers

- Draw us a 'Thank You' and you could win £20!
- Up to 10 prizes to give away!
- Winning drawings will feature on cards to say 'Thank You' to IM colleagues

Your 'Thank You' could be a handshake, a box of chocolates, a bunch of flowers, a beer or a bottle of wine. Or it could be a dog or a cat, or a ride on a horse.

There are no wrong answers, we just want you to draw what 'Thank You' means to you.

All entries to Hollie Dack via email or by post to Sprowston Hub

Entries close Friday 25th August

Customers are invited to draw us a 'Thank You' and could win one of up to 10 prizes. The winning entries will feature on a series of reward cards to be given to colleagues. The competition closes Friday 25th August, so there's still time to get your entries in!

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