



Wiltshire Council

March 2021

# BUILDING Bridges NEWSLETTER

## What is Building Bridges?

Building Bridges is a free and voluntary service which supports people across Swindon and Wiltshire who are facing significant barriers to employment. The team works one-to-one with those who are unemployed or Not in Education or training to help them address the challenges and barriers they are facing and develop a personalized plan to help them achieve their goals at a pace they are comfortable with.

If you, or someone you know would benefit from our support then a referral can be made through our [website](#), where you can also find more information on the programme.

### Covid update:

Please be assured that the Building Bridges programme is still operating and we are keen to take more referrals.

We are holding some face to face meetings where needed outside.

However, we will continue to support participants remotely where possible to keep everyone as safe as possible.

We review our safety measures regularly and make sure they comply with Government guidance.



This is Sean, and the 30th March marked a year that he has worked in the Building Bridges team as a Development Worker.

Sean has worked for Wiltshire Council for five years in different children and adult services helping him gain knowledge about the different needs and barriers that individuals face.

Sean has a degree in sociology and has been a volunteer mentor for young people with SEND.

He is passionate about the work he does; he is non-judgemental and an advocate for tackling stigma. Sean says,

*"I pride myself on motivating and empowering individuals to gain their independence and to actively seek out their own aspirations in life."*

Sean will provide participants with 1:1 support, working with them at a pace that is right for them. Providing support to help participants explore their aspirations through identifying what their needs are to help them overcome any barriers to successfully move into education or employment.



This month we have achieved:

64

Participants supported

2

Participants have secured a job!

3

Participants have returned to education

8

New referrals have been received



## Word Clouds

Our team have been sharing some positive words with one another about how we feel individually now that lockdown is easing. Word clouds are free to use and can be effective to create with someone or simply for yourself to reflect on the positives that are sometimes hard to see when things in our lives don't feel positive.

We chose the analogy of the tree - it highlights the roots of the tree as the first part of coming out of lockdown, and the hopeful feelings we have for a return to some sense of normality and freedom from the leaves and branches.

How to create your own word cloud? [WordArt.com](https://www.wordart.com) - [Word Cloud Art Creator](https://www.wordart.com)



## Let's get Social.

We are on Facebook!

Please like our page for updates and news about the project.

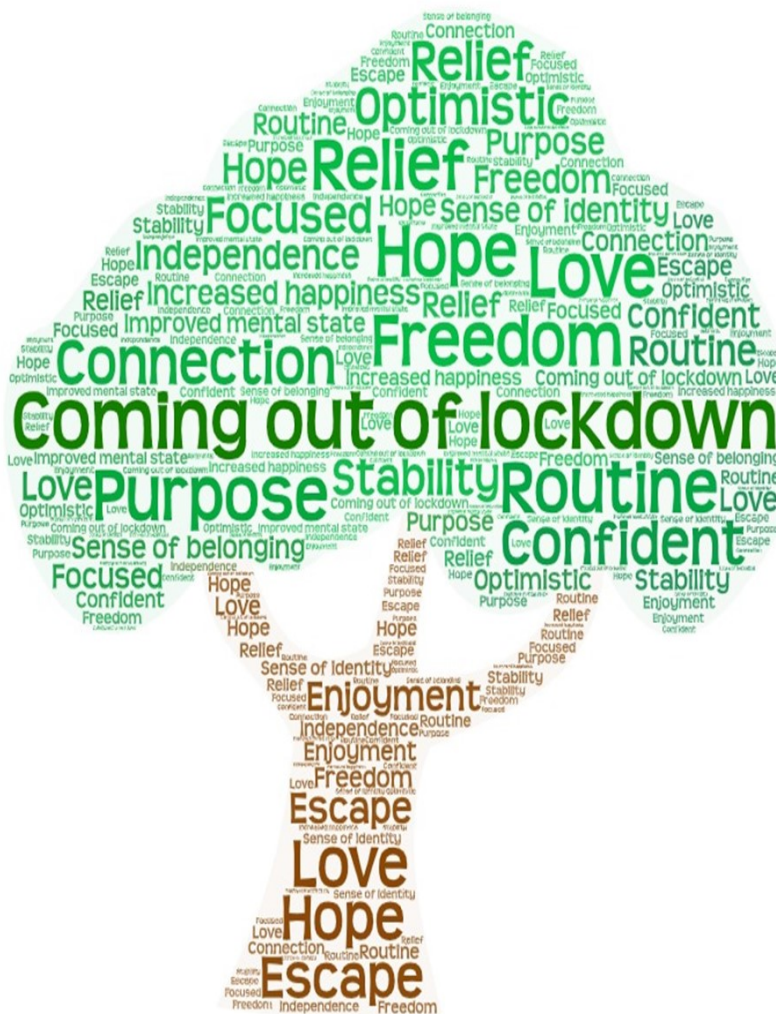
**Search:**

**Building Bridges**

**Wiltshire**

We also have a closed group that participants on the programme can join.

Speak to your development worker if you would like to know more.



### **Hot Tip!**

What activities from lockdown can you put on your CV?

- Any volunteering work; perhaps you have helped out a elderly neighbour or volunteered your services to support a food bank?
- Charity fund raising? Or perhaps you have helped look after a younger sibling or your own children whilst they have been off school.



## BUILDING Bridges—SUCCESS STORY

Tim is in his 40's and has not been in employment for several years after undergoing surgery on his back that did not go as planned. The surgery, unfortunately, left Tim unable to walk for several years, until he started undergoing treatment and therapy to help him walk again. He found out about Building Bridges after completing an online search himself, for an organisation locally that could help him back into employment.

Tim was allocated a Development Worker who first met him at his home address. As they started to build their relationship, Tim's development worker helped him create a plan of what support he needed to enable him back into employment, at a pace that worked for him. Tim felt he was really listened to, and knew he was going to receive the help and support that he wanted.

They initially explored options to start carrying out some voluntary work locally. It wasn't long before Tim started to feel ready to job search, through the support of his development worker and In-work support officer.

Previously, Tim used to drive HGVs and decided that he wanted to return to driving HGVs if he could find a driving job that did not involve any physical lifting. To do this, he needed to complete a CPC test (Certificate of Professional Competence) as a driver. Building Bridges supported him to do this and provided the funding to complete this test - a funding request was submitted on his behalf to apply for the money to cover the cost of the course. The request was approved, and the course was paid for. Tim completed the course remotely from home and passed first time.

Shortly afterwards, Tim applied for two vacancies for jobs as an HGV driver. He found the perfect role! A full-time driving job that did not involve any specific loading or unloading of goods. Utilising our support, he prepared well for his interview and specifically, how to discuss his disability with the employer.

Tim was offered the position and three weeks later he started his job! In-Work Support was offered to him which he accepted. For several weeks, Tim was in regular contact with his In-Work Support Officer to discuss how the job was going and seek support where needed. The job was going well, so shortly afterwards, Tim was signed off the programme.

### Do you know?

**Participants on the programme can receive support with travel training. Support can be provided in a number of ways:**

- **Help with planning a travel route.**
- **Accompanying someone on the route to help them understand what they need to do to build confidence.**



We are trying.....

Isolation is a common theme that runs across most of our participants, both adults and young people. We are looking into ways of bringing people together either 1:1 or in small groups. The purpose of this will be to help those people overcome isolation, share experiences, skills and support one another on their journey into education or employment. We have had some successes already of bringing people together who share a common interest and skill in art.