

**REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR NEIGHBOURHOODS & PREVENTION
COUNCILLOR SHAUKAT HUSSAIN**

**PORTFOLIO CO-ORDINATING
DIRECTOR: SAYYED OSMAN
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DEMENTIA FRIENDS

In January, community members together with 27 volunteers from churches across Blackburn attended two sessions to learn about Dementia and sign up to become Dementia Friends. Those attending became members of the Blackburn with Darwen Dementia Action Alliance which is a group set up to offer practical help to those with Dementia and their carers.

Three years ago the Adult Learning Service began a partnership with the national charity, Dementia Friends and were asked to train and support 100 Dementia Friends in the Borough. Following January's sessions 592 Friends have now trained in the borough, leading to tutor Lynnette Banister gaining national recognition for her work in promoting Dementia awareness and signing up friends.

STRENGTHENING COMMUNITIES - VOLUNTEERING IN LANCASHIRE (SCVL)

The European funded programme '*Strengthening Communities-Volunteering in Lancashire*' has worked with over 400 participants and helped them on a pathway to work. Participants are encouraged to volunteer as a way of gaining valuable skills and experience. Many of the participants have significant barriers to work, with poor mental health being a major issue for many. All participants are assigned a key worker who offers intense support and hand-holding through each stage of the journey towards employment, helping to increase confidence and improve self-esteem.

The below case study illustrates the impact of this service:

A male service user was depressed and suffering from regular anxiety attacks when he started working with the service. He had applied for many jobs but failed to secure any interviews, his Employment Support Allowance (ESA) had been stopped and he was struggling to care for his mum. His key worker encouraged him to seek help for his mum and she is now receiving the support that she needs. The service user was supported to complete a successful application for Job Seekers Allowance (JSA) and develop a new CV and apply for jobs online. Help was also given with interview techniques and support to the interview. Although he was unsuccessful at his first interview, he continued to persevere and has been in full time employment for four months, which he enjoys. The service user now feels empowered and the advice and guidance provided has allowed him to make positive changes in his life.

COMMUNITY SUPPORT (BEFRIENDING)

The service continues to grow and develop befriender volunteers to support people in our communities. One of the service's volunteers is a Community Support Befriender for Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council, Lancashire Volunteer Partnership. She has been described as 'kind, warm, considerate and friendly'. She supports an older gentleman who has suffered from depression due to a family bereavement and occasional excessive drinking. The

gentleman, who has limited mobility and struggles to leave the house, requested support to be able to talk to somebody and for company. The volunteer visits weekly in his home and as well as providing company supports with shopping and walking in the park. The volunteer is very happy with the placement whilst the client feels happier and healthier and looks forward to the visits each week.

GLOBAL ACTS OF UNITY

In February, a number of schools in Blackburn with Darwen participated in interactive sessions with Global Acts of Unity. The company was set up by Mike Haines, brother of David Haines who was killed by Daesh/IS in 2014. Over the last couple of years, Mike has spoken to thousands of young people across the country about his life with his brother, the impact of his death and how he chose to not live with anger and hate but promote unity, tolerance and understanding.

The sessions were impactful and emotive and were a huge success with students in the borough. They were commissioned as part of the Prevent delivery offer to schools in the borough and a variety of schools, both mainstream and independent, faith and non-faith took part. Mike was very complimentary about the schools, staff and students and wrote a blog of his experience in Blackburn which has been promoted through social media channels.
<https://mikehaines.globalactsofunity.com/2019/02/19/by-eck-blackburn-you-were-belting/>

SUCCESSFUL APPLICATION TO CONTROLLING MIGRATION FUND:

Blackburn with Darwen has been successful in securing Controlling Migration Funding for a further year. This will continue to support the work around the integration of asylum seekers and refugees into the borough referred through national mechanism. The funding will be shared between the local authority and third sector providers in both Darwen and Blackburn.

ENHANCED WINTER HOMELSSNESS PROVISION

The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government has produced guidance for all local authorities around the provision of overnight accommodation for rough sleepers during severe cold weather. To meet our duty, the "Severe Weather Emergency Provision" (SWEP) as it is known nationally, should be provided when the outside temperature is forecast to be below zero for at least three consecutive nights.

Here in Blackburn with Darwen we ensure that such provision is available every night of the year so that no one needs to sleep out on the streets of the borough. Additionally, between November and March we have provided further help with security to mitigate some challenges around individuals who have, or would have previously been excluded due to problematic behaviour placing others at risk.