

CREATIVE PEOPLE

Your staff magazine



Issue 2
Autumn 2022



Featuring stories
on 30th Birthday
Staff Awards,
wellbeing,
and training
opportunities

*Diane Booth accepting her
Long Standing Staff Award*

WELCOME

Hi everyone, and welcome to the second issue of your staff magazine Creative People!

We're so excited to bring you a longer edition filled with even more amazing stories from your colleagues across the country, along with information to support you both in your role and with your personal wellbeing.

We've had an amazing summer celebrating our 30th birthday, and you can read about some of our staff award winners who have gone above and beyond to make these last 30 years so incredible. You can also read about some new faces, dedicated longstanding staff, recent award winners, and find out more about our staff teams and how they can support you.

We hope you enjoy reading Creative People, and if you have a story you'd like to share for the next issue, please get in touch with the Communications Team via communications@creativesupport.co.uk

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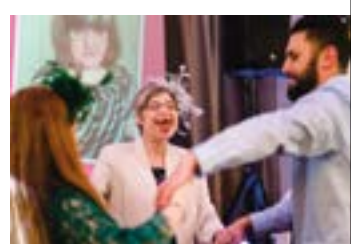
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**creative
ACADEMY**




STAFF AWARDS

This year we've celebrated our 30th birthday, and over the summer we held six very special events across the country. The celebrations were filled with good food, laughter, entertainment and - of course - plenty of dancing!

At some of the events we honoured our wonderful staff and the people we support with an award ceremony, which had everyone smiling, and even brought a few tears of joy! Our winners received a trophy, certificate and voucher to say thank you for everything they do. We chatted with some of our staff award winners, who told us about their time at Creative Support.



Left to right: Diane Booth, CEO Anna Lunts, Helen Alton

Manchester – 21st July

Diane Booth, Senior Support Worker, Kwanzaa House

Having been with Creative Support since 1997, Diane received a Longstanding Staff Award at our Manchester event, complete with a bottle of prosecco! Diane is “excellent at what she does, and cares deeply about all those around her.”

Diane told us: “One of the service users I supported at the event said to me ‘you definitely have to get an award, or something is wrong!’ We all had a giggle, but when they said my name, I really was not expecting it. I was so moved by the appreciation for Kwanzaa House.”

“One thing I’ve learned is to remember why you chose to work in the caring field,

as long as you’re happy in your role. I’ve been with Creative Support for 25 years and I’ve seen a lot of people come and go, but it’s all about staying on board when things get rough. The training I’ve done with Creative Support is exceptional, and has really shaped how I work, and my personal ethics that I use daily to empower others.”

“Big thank you again to all my managers and teams – you have all made my role at Kwanzaa House achievable!”



Birmingham – 30th June

Ingrid Hunt, Team Leader, Sandwell

Ingrid won our 'We Care Superstar Award' for being a 'supportive, helpful and understanding person, as well as a ray of sunshine'.

"I was told by teachers that I'd never amount to anything, and left school with no qualifications. I went back to night school at 31 so I could provide for my son and give him a good life, and eventually I came to work for Creative Support seven years ago."

Ingrid names Jonathan Keane, Service Director as one of her biggest inspirations. "He saw something in me and over the years he's supported and encouraged me. He's never given up on me, including his coaching when I achieved my Level 5



Left to right: Lewis Westwood, Ingrid Hunt, Director Jonathan Keane

Diploma in Social Care last year. People say they go the extra mile, but Jonathan goes to infinity and beyond!"

"I received the award in front of 200 people, which was amazing. I really didn't do too badly for the 15 year old girl who would never achieve anything!"

London – 16th June

Veronica Allen, Team Leader, Duncan Court

Veronica was the winner of a Long Term Commitment Award, having been with Creative Support for 19 years. Veronica is credited for being 'synonymous' with extra care service Duncan Court, and an 'encyclopaedia' for the service. "They could ask me anything about the service and its tenants, I know everything!" she said.

"I like to have a laugh and a joke with people. We've also done reminiscing classes where people would think about things they used to do when they were younger, it was really lovely."

Veronica mentions one of the ladies she supports as one of her inspirations - "She always remembers my name. She's like my mum, we all call her mum!"

"I love my tenants to bits. I do it because I love what I do. I was shocked to win the award – I only came there to escort the tenants, I was so surprised hearing my name called. I didn't expect to get anything at all, just enjoy myself and have fun."



Left to right: Michael, Niel Poole

Blackpool – 7th July

Niel Poole, Support Worker, Lambert Road

Niel was recognised by his team for empowering the person he supports to achieve their goals, and make huge steps towards independence. "Neil Armstrong said 'one small step for man and one giant leap for mankind, and Niel has encouraged this service user to make the biggest leaps,'" read his nomination.

"It's absolutely brilliant to win the award," said Niel.

"It's all about teamwork, and everyone there plays a part. I'm chuffed to be recognised for going the extra mile, as that's my ethos, always!"

"I was very inspired by Anna at the event," said Niel. "I've met other CEOs, and she really keeps it real. There's not many people who I've met that run such large companies, and she's done so well from humble beginnings to now. Best of luck to her and here's to another thirty years!"



TIPS TO EASE SEASONAL AFFECTIVE DISORDER

Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD) is a type of depression that is most common in the autumn and winter months, but in rarer cases people can experience it in summer. During this time, people experience an increase in symptoms such as persistent low mood, loss of interest in everyday activities, feeling less sociable, and sleeping for longer than normal.

The exact cause of SAD is not fully known, but could be linked to a reduced exposure to sunlight during short winter days. This lack of sunlight can stop the hypothalamus from working, which affects your internal clock, and your serotonin and melatonin levels, which can lower your mood and make you tired.

SAD is recommended to be treated like other types of depression. Your GP may recommend you try counselling,

talking therapies, or Cognitive Behaviour Therapy, which is based on the idea that the way we think affects how we feel. Our [Employee Assistance Programme](#) has free mental health services for you and your household, including CBT techniques and talking therapy. You can also access up to eight free counselling sessions per year.

Another treatment is light therapy, which uses a light box to simulate exposure to sunlight. Sitting by the lamp for around 30 minutes to an hour each morning can help. Similarly, sunrise alarm clocks gradually light up the room as you wake up. Make sure you choose one that is medically proven to work with SAD, and check the light intensity you need and length of time you should be using it.



Alongside these treatments, there are small lifestyle changes that can make SAD more manageable.



Try taking a short lunchtime walk, as an extra 10-15 minutes of outdoor light a day can improve your vitamin D levels. Mushrooms also contain vitamin D, so you can get an extra boost by adding more to your diet!



Make your work environments as light and airy as possible, and try to sit near windows when you're indoors.



Keep a diary of your symptoms, including when they start and what seems to trigger them to identify certain patterns.

SAD can be a serious issue and affects many of us. It can worsen if not treated properly, and lead us to feel isolated and experience further mental health issues. Don't brush it off as being 'typical winter blues' - winter can feel like a long period of time. It's important to take small steps to maintain our mental health and wellbeing throughout the year.

COVID Jab



From September, all health and social care staff are eligible to a free booster jab. To protect you and those around you, book in for your booster by visiting the NHS website. By doing so, you are eligible for our Goodwill Payment of up to £100. Please visit creativesupport.co.uk/covid-19-vaccination-claim-form/ for more details.

Flu Jab

Having the flu can make you seriously ill, with symptoms such as nausea, stomach pain, a high temperature, and body aches. To prevent the risk of catching flu, book in for your free jab at your local pharmacy.

Pronouns

The following information has been provided by the LGBTQ+ Network. If you'd like to join the network or find out more, please email lgbtq.network@creativesupport.co.uk.

A pronoun can refer to yourself or someone else being talked about: I, you, he, she, they. Somebody identifying as female may use the pronouns she/her, or as a male may use he/him.

People who are non-binary or genderqueer may choose to use different pronouns depending on their gender identity. They may prefer they/them, or a combination, e.g. she/they.

Putting your pronouns in your email footer is a great way to normalise sharing your pronouns in the workplace. This helps our trans and non-binary colleagues feel safe to disclose theirs too.

The most important thing is to try your best. If you make a mistake, simply correct yourself and move on. The more you use people's pronouns correctly, the easier it will become.



If you are a contracted Creative Support employee, you can apply for our discretionary grant of up to £350 to help you with financial pressures you may be facing.

STAFF WELFARE FUND

In March 2020, we set up our Hardship Fund to help our dedicated and hardworking staff who were facing financial hardship as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. We're so pleased to announce that we're extending this grant as the 'Staff Welfare Fund' for 2022 and 2023, to support our staff who need some extra help during these difficult times. To date we have provided non-refundable grants to over 200 members of staff at a total cost of £38,000. We have set aside a further £10,000 to continue to support those of you who need it.

Our grant can help with a number of different issues. Here are some examples of what our grant has gone towards:

- Moving costs
- Bereavement
- Relationship breakdown
- Transport
- Bills (including utility and veterinary)
- Childcare
- Vehicle repairs
- Household appliances
- Essential house repairs
- Medication
- Domestic abuse
- Debts

Our Staff Welfare Fund will run until the **2nd January 2023**.

To apply, you can find the application form on the [staff area](#) of our website. If you have any questions, please get in touch at welfare.fund@creativesupport.co.uk.

You will receive an outcome within five working days of applying (excluding bank holidays), and we encourage you to use HR support if you need. Please note that applications are not open to anyone who has previously received the Hardship Fund (2020-2021). This is simply to ensure that we reach as many people as possible.

Further Support

You can also access our [Staff Help Pack](#), which includes the latest advice around external grants and funds, financial advice, and mental health and wellbeing support.

We would also like to remind you that we have a new [Domestic Abuse Policy](#), allowing you to receive support from counsellors, additional time off, and the possibility of short-term flexible working. All conversations with your manager will be confidential.

health assured

New digital updates!

Our Employee Assistance Programme offers free advice and support for you and members of your family. They have a 24/7 service, and you can access up to eight free one-to-one counselling sessions a year.

You can call their helpline on **0800 030 5182 or 0800 028 0199**.

Log in to healthassured.eap.co.uk using the username **Creative** and password **Support**, where you can attend monthly webinars, health assessments, four-week programmes

and more. They have a range of financial advice, assessments and tools to support you.

Their new podcast Peace of Mind covers a range of mental health topics with trained counsellors, and they run a monthly mental health hour on their Instagram page with Q&A sessions.

Through their **My Healthy Advantage App** you can set personal goals, track your mood, and access four new zones with guided meditation, fitness videos, healthy recipes, and sleep resources. To log in, please use our code **MHA001768**.



Employee Benefits

Did you know that as a health and social care worker, no matter your role, you're eligible for discounts on the high street, entertainment and more!

charityworkerdiscounts

This is a [free website](#) that you can sign up to and receive regular emails about discounts. You can save money on the high street, book a cheap getaway, or save with discounted cinema tickets.



Creative Support are registered with 'Your Rewards', with offers on holidays, health and beauty, and retail. Visit yourrewards.co.uk with the login **CREATIVE** and password **BENEFITS**. Examples include saving up to 40% on AA breakdown cover.



BLUE LIGHT CARD.

You can buy a [Blue Light Card](#) for £4.99 for two years' access to their amazing range of discounts. You can save with hundreds of high street retailers, restaurants and entertainment. Save 10% on your ASDA shop, 20% with NCP or Q-Park and up to 25% on a range of chain restaurants.

Benefits Booklet

We've just updated our Employee Benefits Booklet, with all the perks you're entitled to as an employee of Creative Support.

- **Welcome Back Grant:** Staff who return to Creative Support at least three months after leaving can get £200 worth of vouchers
- **Birthday Holiday Bonus:** After two years' service you can take one additional day of paid leave for your birthday
- **Paid Leave:** We offer paid leave for carers, maternity, paternity, adoption, bereavement, study and compassionate leave
- **Long Service Award:** You can receive £100 in vouchers for 10 years' service, increasing by £50 every five years!



New & Long Standing Staff

After having worked in a betting shop for almost 20 years, Ryan Harrison changed career paths and started as a Support Worker in Whitby, North Yorkshire at the beginning of 2022. He received three Employee Appreciation Award nominations after only a few months in, and has been credited as being a “breath of fresh air”, making such a positive impression in such a short amount of time.



Why did you decide to start a career in care?

I've only had one other job, I worked in a betting shop for 19 years. [Working in care] wasn't something I'd ever considered much, as I hadn't had much exposure to it. Support workers used to come into the betting shop with the people they were supporting, or service users would come in on their own, so we had a strong focus on protecting young and vulnerable people from the harmful effects of gambling. I ended up developing a close relationship with one person who came in, and I thought that

I'd enjoy getting out and about to support people to be active parts of the community.

What makes a rewarding career for you?

The level of respect and thanks I get now is crazy in comparison, and being able to work at your own pace. I don't feel weekends are any different than other days of the week. At the shop, bank holidays and weekends used to be so busy. The pandemic was really stressful too, so working through that gave me huge respect for anybody who works in retail. I wouldn't really ever want to go back.

When you're supporting someone it's more collaborative. I think I'm pretty lucky at my service and with Creative Support to have such a great group of people to support and team to work with.

“Someone said to me once that if you do a job you love you never work a day in your life, and I really feel like I don't work!”

Bali Kaur, Team Leader at Greenland Drive in Leicester, has recently received our Long Service Award for being with us for 12 years. Bali talked to us about some of the important things she's learned along the way, and being motivated to make a difference every day.

What are some of the most important things you've learned?

I think learning about respecting service user choice and independence - we don't all fit in one box and everyone is different. It's also important to concentrate on what people can rather than what they can't do. We have one service user who is from India, and he really missed his Indian food, so we supported him to learn how to cook curry from scratch! He can make the rice and naan too, and he never uses packaged sauces now and prefers to make them himself. He came to me and said how it smells like back home, and like how his mum used to make. That's what gets me out of bed in the morning. The staff took the skills back home with them too, which was amazing.

Is there anyone that inspires you, or anyone who you think you get your caring nature from?

My dad has cancer right now and is living at home with me, and my mum has dementia, so I'm always being a carer. My mum inspired me to do things for myself as I used to lack confidence, and I ended up completing my NVQ Level 5 a few years ago, which is one of my proudest moments. I have quite a positive attitude and I'm not a defeatist so I also inspire myself! With my mum and dad, I know

“It's important to concentrate on what people can rather than what they can't do.”



there's nothing I can do we have to get on with life. I know there's people worse off than me, so I think let's do something that makes us feel good as well. My team also help me through bad times, the laughter and tears. My manager Bex Snowball is an inspiration to me, and so is Miranda Bryan, Unit Business Manager.



Long Service Awards

Each year, we give out our Long Service awards for our contracted staff who have been with us for over ten years. On their ten year work anniversary we give out a **£100** voucher, increasing by **£50** for every five years of service!

You can read about our other benefits in our Employee Benefits Booklet.



BANK TEAM SUPERSTAR

Fiona Swift joined us in 2008 as a member of our bank team in Blackpool, alongside working as a counsellor. Two years ago she officially retired, but this hasn't stopped her from regularly picking up shifts. Fiona puts an incredible amount of passion and care into all she does, and has spent her working life helping others.

"I'd never worked in support before, and I was so nervous in the interview. My interviewer

reminded me that I have a daughter with moderate learning disabilities, a son with ADHD, and I'd spent the last two years of my life caring for my mother before she passed. It was then I realised I had the skills to do the job."

Fiona has always been on our bank team, as it allowed her to flexibly pick up shifts around her counselling job. "I like the freedom and choice of work you can get. I like that I can also take a break if I want a day out or a weekend away, and

my shifts can help pay for it as the state pension isn't a lot of money."

"I used to work for a doctor's surgery, and I remember the receptionist saying she doesn't know how I do it, as my clients would turn up looking down and miserable, and then all they heard was laughter, and they'd come out with a spring in their step! I can instil confidence in others, but I find it hard to do it in myself. I used to support a lovely lady three times a week, and

she just loved me. She always talks about me now and I got worried the other staff were fed up of hearing it! I'm very conscious about that sort of thing, so I always make sure to thank them."

In 2020, Fiona retired from her counselling job, and decided to drop her hours to only pick up one bank shift a month. "Just after that COVID hit, and there was nothing to do but sit in the house. I lasted two weeks not working! Throughout the pandemic I was doing 50 hours a week, but I'm used to it so I didn't find it stressful. I think I'd miss work if I gave it up, it's a big part of my life."

"When I think about it, all my working life has centred around helping others, but I've honestly never thought of it that way until now. Working in care I get a great sense of satisfaction when I see a beaming smile or get a 'thank you'. I'm at my happiest doing things for others. I also love driving around in my little yellow sports car with the top down, playing bowls with my friends, and spending time with my wonderful granddaughters."

"When I think about it, all my working life has centred around helping others."



Left to right: Fiona Swift, Service Users Carol Hilton and Ann Baker, Support Worker Joanne Howitt

Before starting full-time work, Fiona was actually a famous face around Blackpool - if you were around in the 70s, you may have seen her on TV! "I actually used to do a bit of modelling back in the day - I did a 'welcome to Blackpool' advert on the TV. I was also a Pantene hair model, and I did a fashion show for Queen Elizabeth II's royal dressmaker. I look back and think what a good time I had, and what a time it was to be young!"

Sign up to Sona

Sona is a free app that allows you to easily view and pick up overtime and bank shifts at your service and in the wider area.

To sign up, please go to form.typeform.com/to/Eh3ViFZT or email bank.staff@creativesupport.co.uk

Scan QR
code to
download
the app



TRAINING & DEVELOPMENT

Moving Up

Skills for Care's 'Moving Up' programme is a management course that supports Black, Asian and minority ethnic staff to progress in their career. It aims to improve self-confidence, leadership skills, and gain an awareness of how protected characteristics and culture impact practice.

This programme is aimed at senior support workers and support coordinators, team leaders, supervisors, project managers, registered managers, and locality and area managers.

Our lovely Reception Manager Kizzy Green recently completed the



Kizzy Green

course. "I can proudly say I am a much more confident person now. The Moving Up programme has played a huge part in developing my personal aspirations. It's helped me to progress in my career, but also provided the tools needed to overcome barriers within myself that I

didn't realise were there."

Creative Support will fund places on the programme, and study leave will be available to support those who enrol.

Keep an eye out on your emails for upcoming enrolment dates.

Congratulations! 🎉

Congratulations to everyone who has worked hard and achieved their Health & Social care vocational qualifications recently through our Creative Academy. Everyone will receive £50 in vouchers, and be celebrated in a mini award ceremony.

The following staff members have recently achieved their Level 5 Diploma in Leadership and Management for Adult Care: *James Parker, Penny Greenwood, Fiona Pearson, Lucy Bradshaw and Leanne Forrester.*

The following staff members have received their Level 3 Diploma in Adult Care (RQF): *Lindsay Grimley, Isaac Olaye, Peter Hoyle, K.Teneng Penn and Meghan Bayliss.*



Grimes who was incredibly supportive and ensured I kept focused."

James said "I started my qualification a few months prior to the pandemic which meant it was off to a rocky start. However, I had a fantastic assessor in Alice

"It is a very worthwhile and useful qualification and has helped me reflect on and develop my practices to the benefit of my teams and those we support."

Mental Health First Aiders Directory

If you need some informal mental health support you can contact anybody in our Mental Health First Aiders directory.

Our Mental Health First Aiders have been trained to intervene, support, and signpost a person in distress. Currently we have over 70 members of staff in our directory, from eight localities across the country. To access the directory, please visit the staff area of our website. This will be confidential and your information will not be shared without your consent.

Our Mental Health First Aid course has trained hundreds of people across the country to provide the first steps to help people needing mental health support. When someone completes the MHFA course, they develop the confidence to step in and be able to help someone in distress, both at work and in the wider world.

Chloé Bonnell in Manchester is a member of our directory, who recently used her skills to reach out to someone in distress on public transport. "I wouldn't have had the confidence to speak to someone about their mental health prior to completing the course," she explained. "But afterwards, you have the information and ability to feel comfortable speaking to people about how they're feeling as it feels less taboo. I was



Chloé Bonnell

really glad to have been able to help, by doing something as simple as lending a non-judgemental ear."

Everyone who has completed the MHFA course over the past year said that their personal confidence in supporting others with a mental health issue improved, and so did their understanding of how to support people. As a result of the training, everyone who provided feedback said that they were now less likely to negatively judge people experiencing problems with their mental health.

Our directory is here to help you, and we encourage all of our staff to contact someone if you are feeling low, or you would like to talk informally and confidentially about any issues you may be facing. Please note that our Mental Health First Aiders are not trained counsellors, and if you need appropriate professional help, you can also access free counselling and support via our Employee Assistance Programme. You can find more information about this on page 11.

If you are interested in becoming a qualified Mental Health First Aider, please email training@creativesupport.co.uk or call **0161 238 7664**. The course runs once a month over two days, in-person at our Mansion House building in Stockport.

creative
ACADEMY

INVESTORS IN PEOPLE
We invest in people Gold

Creative Academy is our Learning & Development department, and is **Investors in People Gold** status. We offer many vocational qualifications in Health and Social care, providing individualised support at all levels from our fantastic assessment team.

Please visit creativeacademy.org.uk for more information

EMPLOYEE APPRECIATION GIVEAWAY

Each month, we're giving away 10 boxes of Hotel Chocolat chocolates to colleagues who are nominated for our Employee Appreciation Awards. Every three months one lucky person will win our Grand Quarterly Prize, and have the choice of two days extra annual leave, an experience of their choice, or a prize of up to £200!

'Ray of sunshine' Angela Mallam has been with Creative Support for 16 years, and received three nominations from her team at Amersham Road in Middlesbrough.

"I mainly work with two gorgeous young ladies," said Angela. "They had difficulties of their own during COVID, and they couldn't get out like they were used to. I took my sewing machine in and got them making things and keeping busy as a distraction." Angela is a bit of a whizz with her machine,

helping to alter clothes for people in the service, make Christmas stockings and even Halloween costumes! Her sewing machine now lives at the service, ready for any exciting future activities.

When asked what makes a good day for her, Angela said that her support sessions with the twins make her happy. "One of the girls really loves cats, so I looked online and found a nearby cat café and surprised them with it. They absolutely loved it, and seeing that made a good day for me."

Angela was praised by her team for being 'a pleasure to work with', and giving guidance and reassurance when needed. "I think that probably comes with a bit of age!" said Angela. "Being surrounded by a caring and loving family

and being taught these things is important." Angela lists her dad as one of her inspirations, who taught her the old saying 'if you don't have anything nice to say, don't say it at all.' "He would never say anything bad about anybody, and that your bad thoughts don't need to be shared."

For her special quarterly prize, Angela used her vouchers towards a holiday. "I treated my husband and I to a couple days' break away in the Lake District, it was lovely."



**CREATIVE PEOPLE
APPRECIATION
AWARDS**

We're changing! Our Employee Appreciation Awards is now our Creative People Appreciation Awards. Keep an eye on your emails for all the info, and for our next round of nominations.



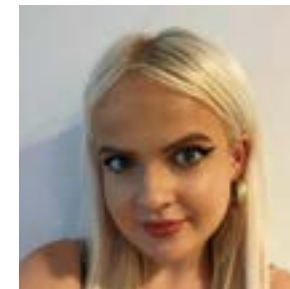
Angela, Tiffany and Lindsey

VOLUNTEERING

We're so happy that our volunteer programme is back up and running after lockdown. We've already welcomed so many wonderful volunteers, who provide such fantastic support to our services.

Crisis Cafe, Birmingham

Kirsty started volunteering with us last October, since the opening of our Crisis Café in Birmingham. The Café provides a welcoming and safe space for people who are experiencing emotional distress.



"I enjoy how rewarding the role is, you can make a real difference just by listening and validating people's experiences. I mostly enjoy the dynamic nature of the café, you see people from all walks of life with many different problems. It makes you realise that so many people experience similar issues, which is kind of comforting in a way. It goes to show that we are never alone in the things we're experiencing."



Kempton House, Salford

Hanna has just started volunteering at Kempton House, and is already settling in so well to her role.

"I've been made very welcome by both the staff and the residents, which has really boosted my confidence!" said Hanna. "I'm volunteering to gain hands-on experience in the sector as I want to study a BSc in Learning Disability Nursing and Social Work."

"I feel truly able to empathise with the residents at the service, as I share a lived experience of struggling with mental health conditions. I view my life experiences as a 'good teacher', as without these challenges I would not be the resilient person I am today. I really feel that I've been accepted by the residents, and I feel at home already!"

Want volunteers to help at your service?

We're currently recruiting volunteers all across the country, including Bedford, London, Manchester and Birmingham, with more areas being added regularly. We have a variety of volunteering roles we can recruit for, including:

- **Befrienders**, who meet up with service users and help them to access their local community
- **Activities Assistants**, who deliver sessions such as arts and crafts, bingo, fitness and baking
- **Admin Assistants**, who provide support in our hubs
- **Disco Volunteers**, who set up and pack away equipment, collect tickets, and provide refreshments

If your team would like to recruit a volunteer for one of the roles above, or any other role you have in mind, please get in touch with our Volunteering and Activities Development Officer Joanne Hook on:

joanne.hook@
creativesupport.co.uk



ACHIEVE Q

Earlier this year, Kay Goacher in Doncaster won Achieve Q Silver for her exceptional compassion when supporting her colleague Jade through a bereavement. Despite being contracted 15 hours a week, Kay worked 60 hour weeks for two months to pick up Jade's shifts, and donated all the extra money towards her bills and the funeral service. Kay chatted with us about the family-like bond they have at her service, and how her family has influenced her kind and caring nature.



Kay [left] and Jade

Kay has worked in care for over 30 years, and although she started with Creative Support on a full-time contract, she later decided to drop her hours to part-time so she could visit her mum in hospital. "Becky (Loosemore) and Kim (Bunclark) were really good with helping me out and offering me extra shifts," said Kay. "So, when that happened with Jade I picked up quite a few more for a couple of months. To be honest, it's not hard work when you enjoy it. It's a pleasure going when you enjoy your job, it's easy!"

When asked what motivates her to go above and beyond for her colleagues, Kay spoke about her upbringing, and the influence on her from her family. "It was just the way I was brought up, and through my life when people were there for me it was like a godsend," she explained. "I had a lovely upbringing, and my mam was right caring with me, she'd do anything for you - it was just the norm."

Jade tragically lost her brother when he was just 20, and Kay explained how much she felt for the family, and her decision to help. "It's just something you do, you feel for people. It was

so difficult for the family and your heart just went out to them. I know what it's like for people when they're struggling or sorting childcare, having been there myself. Now I'm in a position where I'm alright and I can help. If I asked anybody to do a shift for me they'd all say yes. You get back what you put in!"

"It's just something you do, you feel for people."

ACHIEVE
Quality

Is there someone at your service who you think deserves recognition? Our Achieve Q Awards are for people who have done incredible things and go above and beyond their role to make a difference to the people they support.

If you know someone who fits the bill, write them a nomination, using the [form](#) here.

Make the Most of your Annual Leave

Many of us use our leave around holidays, to go abroad or attend events, but we don't always need a reason to want a break from work. Last year, just 40% of people in the UK took a maximum of half of their annual leave, with the average person taking just 62%.

We want to make it easy for you to plan and take your annual leave throughout the year, and you can do so with our [Record Form for 2022/23](#). Not taking regular breaks for months at a time can lead to burnout, which is a state of emotional, physical and mental exhaustion caused by ongoing stress.

You may not want to take leave for a number of reasons, such as feeling like you're too busy, guilt about leaving work to your colleagues, or worrying your responsibilities won't be covered while you're away. Everybody deserves a



break to relax and unwind, and it can be a welcome break from office work and routine.

How to make the most of your annual leave:

- **Book holidays in advance which will save money and remind you that you have something to look forward to!**
- **Use it to do odd jobs around the house that you've been avoiding, or catch up on sleep**
- **Pass on 'must do' work in advance so you don't have to worry about being needed when you're off**
- **Catch up with your family and friends**
- **Turn off your work phone and avoid checking work emails**

Birthday Bonus

Did you know that if you've been with Creative Support for over two years, you can take off an additional day for your birthday? Our Birthday Holiday Bonus gives our contracted staff an extra day off around your special day.



Taking leave is a necessity, and we really encourage everyone to use it the best you can. Rather than thinking of it as 'leave' or a 'holiday', think of it as a time to recharge or rest, which everyone needs. You're legally entitled to take it, and it's essential for your physical and mental wellbeing.

Enjoy your annual leave!



"I recently took some annual leave in August to attend the Edinburgh Fringe festival. I went to a Q&A with Ian McKellen, which had always been a dream of mine! It was nice to have a break from my usual routine." - **Bex Brown, Centre Co-ordinator at Creative Together**



CAREER CHANGE



After working as a PE teacher for 11 years, Care Support Worker Andy Hughes in Telford switched careers two years ago. He chatted with us about his transition into care, the new skills he's had to learn, and how he manages through difficult times.

"I was really good at the job, but it was time for a change," said Andy. "One of the parents in the school worked for Creative Support, and encouraged me to apply if I was looking for something fulfilling."

At first Andy was supporting younger people, but due to COVID he ended up moving to a different service, and providing higher levels of care for older people. "It was quite overwhelming at first, but after a few weeks I started to form a bit of a bond with some of the guys."

"[The role] has changed me a lot - my life skills have got better, as when I got there it would take me half an hour to change a duvet! I remember the first time I did it one of my team came in and told me it was inside out and I thought 'oh my god, I have to do it again'. It also gives you a different perspective on life, helping

people who require a lot of support."

At the start of this year, Andy won an Achieve Q Silver award for using his coaching sessions to raffle off a new football, raising £70 to buy decorations and lights. "Other services had more decorations than us, and honestly I didn't want them to win!" he said. Andy is no stranger to fundraising, and during COVID raised £800 by eating the world's hottest pepper live on Facebook. "That was going to the extreme - I was curled up in the garden by the end of it. It was worth it, but the raffle was a bit easier!"

Recently, Andy went through the heart-breaking loss of one of the people he supported, and was with him during his final moments. "I was doing a lot of waking nights, and I'd never done those before, but I ended up doing five

on the trot to be with him in hospital. I'd be getting home at half seven in the morning and getting a couple of hours sleep - it was really rough. I sat beside him when he passed. I rode home on my bike, cried, showered, went to sleep, and since then I've been okay. I know that I loved him to bits, that he had a good life and that I've given him the best support that I can. They even asked me to be a pallbearer at the funeral."

"I don't think most people understand how much support workers do, it's a lot more than what people realise."

MEET THE RECEPTION TEAM

Our Reception Team are available Monday to Friday 8am-5pm, and it's likely that you will have spoken to one of these lovely people at one time or another! The team serve as the face and voice of Creative Support, here to help our staff, service users and the public with queries.

You can contact the reception team if you wish to speak with someone at Head Office, or you can send an email to:

reception@creativesupport.co.uk

Our Reception Team are also recent winners of our Achieve Q Silver award! The team were nominated for their hard work across the whole organisation. They recently put a new system in place to handle payroll queries, created a new courier form to streamline sending parcels, and even brightened up the outdoor car park with potted plants.

"They are always cheerful and create a welcome vibe in head office. The level of compassion and understanding they show for each other and our customers is outstanding," read their nomination.

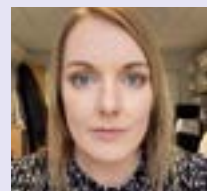
"Their patience is immeasurable, and their little touches are the biggest: the Appreciation Wall in the kitchen, gifts for Easter, Valentine's Day, and popping in to say good morning when I'm lone working. Each person is absolute quality in every single way!"

To speak to the reception team, call **0161 236 0829** or email reception@creativesupport.co.uk

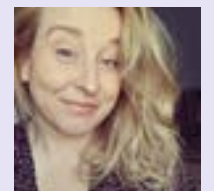


KIZZY GREEN
Reception Manager

"I absolutely love being part of the reception team. We are a dynamic, fast-paced department with various responsibilities. At our busiest, we can take as many as 1000 calls a day!"



EMILY CLOUGH
Reception, Purchasing & Facilities Manager



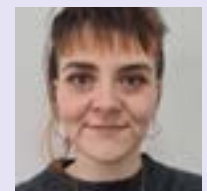
EMMA WILSON
Senior Receptionist



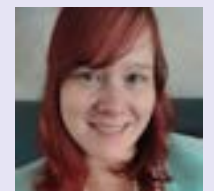
JULIE HINCHY
Receptionist



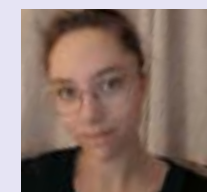
DIONNE RUSSELL
Receptionist



LAUREN NORTON
Receptionist



RACHEL BERNARD
Receptionist



JADE SUMNER
Receptionist



Interested in earning extra?

We're looking for additional staff to join and cover the Duty Admin shift rota at Head Office, giving you a great opportunity to earn extra money whilst providing a valuable service. Full training is provided and shadow shifts can be arranged.

We have a variety of shifts available:

- Monday to Friday 5pm-8pm
- Saturday or Sunday 8am-2pm or 2pm-8pm
- Bank Holidays 8am-2pm or 2pm-8pm

You'll receive an enhanced rate of pay: Monday to Thursday at time and a third; Friday to Sunday at time and a half; Bank Holidays at time and a half.

If you're interested, please contact sarah.smith@creativesupport.co.uk or call 0161 236 0829

POLICIES KEEPING YOU INFORMED

Creative Support's policies cover a wide range of areas to help you in your role, safeguard the people you support, and also ensure you feel supported in your personal life too.

We now send out monthly emails to let you know which policies have been updated. We ask that you do not share any information relating to our policies with anyone outside of the organisation, without the express permission of both your Director and Jonathan Bradshaw, the Social Care Governance Lead.

You can find a full list of our policies in the staff area of our website, under the '[Hot Links](#)' area on the right. The policies web page lists all of our current and updated policies alphabetically, and includes dates of when they were last updated.

Keep an eye on your emails in the last week of every month for the monthly update, and if you have any questions about any of our policies, please email policies@creativesupport.co.uk

CONTACT US



communications@creativesupport.co.uk



0161 236 0829



www.creativesupport.co.uk



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