

4a3

Secondment

Do

Second a worker from health or social care into a mainstream organisation to advise them on how to support people.

Story

The Community Opportunity Service is committed to working in partnership with the Lewisham Time Bank Network, so a COS worker is seconded one day per week to RGTB (Rushey Green Time Bank – which is like a volunteering project designed to strengthen

the community). The aim of the secondment is to increase RGTB's understanding of mental health issues, to educate and advise. The initial impact will be upon the RGTB worker, and this will be cascaded to RGTB participants, *(personal communication, 2004)*

Hints & Hazards

This is an extension of Cross-Agency Mentoring (see 4a4). A supporter for the agency (rather than for the person) may help people in the agency relax, welcome the individual and realise that they can provide the support themselves. It demonstrates a real commitment to the organisation, and being there means that advice is on tap when it is needed. A part time secondment allows the worker to bring back a detailed understanding of the community organisation and so raise awareness amongst colleagues. The secondee is drawn into the mainstream organisation and all sorts of other tasks and opportunities emerge that may increase effectiveness or divert the person from their core role.

If the secondee is limited to working only with certain participants, then this may be divisive. The inclusion worker may not be formally seconded to the host community, but may have a desk or base there. A much quicker way of establishing a connection between staff is to spend a day or two shadowing a colleague in the community organisation.

Before the secondment begins, plan how the secondee will identify someone within the organisation and gently teach and inform them so that they can continue the work after the secondee withdraws.