

Support Needed	Support provided/ Outcome
<p>A customer came into the library to ask for food recycling bags as she had just moved to the area and wasn't aware of the collection days for her recycling or general waste. She also wanted to set up a Council Tax account but didn't know how to do it.</p>	<p>I found out the collection days of her recycling and general waste collection using the Blaenau Gwent App. I suggested to her that she downloads the app to her mobile phone as this is where she would be able to find this and other information about the Local Authority</p> <p>I sent an email to Council Tax with all details to set her account up and informed her that as soon as she has been provided with a reference number she could call back in for me to provide her with a Pay Point card.</p> <p>I also gave her three hessian sacks for her recycling and advised that if she required any further information she could call back in and see me.</p>
<p>A customer came in with a friend who was very distressed at not being able to get an appointment with her GP because they were struggling with some mental health issues. She was required to provide a sick note to staff at the Job Centre. She also explained that she has an issue with her property, specifically that there is no running water and the ceiling has fallen through in her bathroom.</p>	<p>I called her GP surgery, explained who I was and described the details of the customer to the receptionist. The receptionist advised she would ask a doctor to call her within the next few hours.</p> <p>I also sent a referral to Supporting People for help with both her mental health issues and the situation with the house.</p> <p>The customer came back into the hub a few days later and explained that the GP had rung her which made her feel loads better because she was able to talk in person to someone. They provided her with a sick note which she could give to staff at the Job Centre so that her benefit would continue.</p> <p>She also told me that Platform has been in touch with her and they are in the process of helping her with the issues she has with her house.</p>
<p>A customer came into the hub and explained they were struggling to manage his electricity bill payments. After an in depth conversation it became clear the customer has issues budgeting his money mainly caused by an addiction to online games and gambling. Customer advised he struggles to trust people and finds it difficult to accept help but feels safe when he is supported in the libraries with both Aneurin Leisure Trust and Blaenau Gwent staff.</p>	<p>I made a referral made to National Energy Action (NEA) for fuel / energy support because of his inability to manage his electricity bill and a referral to Citizens Advice for specialist debt advice.</p>

<p>A customer came in to the hub to enquire about a bus pass as he was new to the area and didn't know how to obtain one. After discussion with him, and taking into account he was new to the area, it became apparent he also knew nothing about the recycling process or the day it was collected, his general waste collection day or how he could set up Council Tax liability. The customer explained he had already sorted his Universal Credit with DWP for his housing costs. For his bus pass he only had one form of identification that showed his address but I was aware Transport For Wales would require two. He needed bus pass urgently because he had hospital appointments to attend and couldn't drive due to a medical condition with his legs. The customer also mentioned that he had personal belongings held in storage in Cardiff and didn't know how he was going to get them transported to his new Blaenau Gwent address as he was unable to drive. This was further complicated because the storage company were charging him in excess of £250 per week to store it.</p>	<p>Firstly, I gave the customer a map of Blaenau Gwent and highlighted some of the amenities for him to familiarise himself with, such as supermarkets, Doctor surgeries and post offices. I also gave him the leaflet on the recycling and explained the process. I rang Council Tax to set up his account having in mind that this would provide him with a bill to use as the other form of identification with his address shown so that he could apply for his pass with the confidence. Council Tax explained to me that to save time they would email the bill to him (he had an email address) to allow him to apply more quickly rather than waiting for the hard copy to arrive by post. I also helped him complete an application for Council Tax Reduction but during conversation it was evident he required further support. I sent a referral to NEA to help the customer set up his gas and electricity accounts because he wanted to see if he could move to prepayments as this would be more manageable for him. With regards to his belongings stored in Cardiff, I rang a removal service company to enquire about support and gave them the scenario of the customer. The customer was happy for me to give him his mobile number so they could contact him to make arrangements to pick up his belongings. The customer called me back on my mobile at the library to thank me for all my help and support as that my support had made a massive difference to him.</p>
<p>A customer and his wife came into Hub and explained they moved into Blaenau Gwent in June 2021. They had moved to the UK in early 2021. Whilst they could speak good English there were one or two language barrier issues. The customer was a newly enrolled student at University and his wife stays home to look after their young child. They were unfamiliar with the UK benefit system so I advised them of Universal Credit/Child Benefit and guidance around "Right to Reside".</p>	<p>I referred them to Citizens Advice for a full benefit entitlement check. I also referred them to National Energy Action for advice on minimising gas and electric costs. The customer wanted to call Child Benefit independently so to encourage self-serve I provided the helpline number for them to use. I assisted the customers in applying for Council Tax Reduction through BG Website with customer. We had a long, friendly conversation about the local area and how much they were enjoying Blaenau Gwent and looking</p>

	<p>forward to seeing snow for the first time. It was very rewarding to help these new residents to the area.</p>
<p>A customer visited the Hub to apply for hers and her husband's Blue Badges. It was the first time she'd left the house in 18 months due to the pandemic and she was very nervous. I explained that the interview area had been sanitised since the last customer had left, the screen was in place, hand sanitiser was available and masks were there for protection too. The customer explained that both she and her husband have many health conditions, with her husband living with dementia and unable to leave the home.</p>	<p>I applied for the Blue Badges. We had a conversation about care provisions and support with her husband but they were already expecting a visit from social services to assess his condition. The customer was very grateful for the help and the conversation we had. The customer was frail and unsteady on her feet so hub staff carried all bags and shopping to car to support and felt relieved and happy that she knows where to come for any more support</p>
<p>A customer presented herself to the hub as homeless. She had just left a relationship and had absolutely nothing on her, including mobile phone, to contact Housing Options.</p>	<p>I rang the Housing Options Team and explained the situation and handed the phone to the lady who spoke directly to the Housing advisor. She was directed to go to a local Bed and Breakfast facility. I arranged a food parcel to be delivered to her and made a referral to Social Services for a support worker to help her.</p> <p>Approximately 3 weeks later the lady came back and said she had been given a flat in a sheltered accommodation but had no money to move and no furniture.</p> <p>I applied for a Discretionary Housing Payment to help with moving costs and applied for a Discretionary Assistance Fund grant for furniture and items at the new flat. Later the customer came in to the hub and explained she had been awarded a fridge, a freezer, an armchair and sofa, cutlery, crockery, pots and pans, a bed, mattress, pillows, pillow cases, duvet, duvet cover and sheets. She said she was absolutely delighted and so grateful for the support provided by staff in the hubs.</p>
<p>A young customer came in with his father as he had received a Notice seeking possession from his landlord and a court summons for over £2,000 for rent arrears. Both were very distraught and did not know what to do and had come to the hubs to see if staff there could provide any help, advice and support.</p>	<p>I spoke to one of the Housing options team who asked me to send him copies of all the paperwork the customer had brought in. It was decided that a small payment could be awarded to the landlord from the Tenancy hardship grant fund which would be enough to stop the eviction. It was then advised that he speaks to his landlord to set up a repayment plan to suspend the court summons.</p>

	<p>The customers also made an appointment to complete a Housing application form in order to acquire more affordable accommodation.</p> <p>I spoke to the Council Tax section as there was a large amount of arrears on the account and they agreed to hold any further action and set up a repayment plan which the customer said he could afford. I have also arranged for the customer to come back to the hub with some more information and we will apply for a Discretionary Housing Payment to help with the shortfall on his rent. I also completed a Council Tax Reduction application for him to get some help with his current council tax liability.</p> <p>When they left they both said how they felt a weight had been lifted off their shoulders as they did not know where to go for help.</p>
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