

## Pete's Story

I entered the service in 2011, because I had been made redundant. Work has always been a major part of my life, having previously run my own business. Despite desperately looking for work, I had been unable to find any. To compound this, my health was getting worse, I was struggling to manage my diabetes and I had been diagnosed with arthritis that was getting progressively worse. I previously suffered with depression from 1993 – 1996, which ultimately led to me being admitted to St Georges. I knew that my depression was returning, and I didn't want to go down that line again, so I approached my doctor who suggested going to Emotional Wellbeing.

I wasn't sure what to expect, I knew that I would probably have to discuss "things" again, but I wasn't sure about what the service had to offer. When I first came here I met a Community Wellbeing Worker, and we discussed my future work aspirations due to the deterioration in my health. We explored other options such as retraining. My arthritis meant that I couldn't use my hands and arms the same as I used to do, meaning that I couldn't work in the field of mechanics anymore. I then began to claim Employment Support Allowance, which I am still currently on. In spite of my difficulties, I am retraining. I recently passed my European Computer Driving Licence, Level 1 Mathematics, and I am presently studying level 2. I am hoping to go on to do English Level 1 and 2. All this was all brought about by the help I got through Emotional Wellbeing.

I wanted a new start in life, and because I am the type of person who has to be doing something I enrolled on the Emotional Wellbeing Volunteer Training Course in 2012. I have been supporting clients by helping to run a coffee morning and also through 1-1 peer mentoring in the community. I help people to attend benefit tribunals, access local services such as CAB, and act as a befriender for those who find it difficult to socialise independently. This role gives me both personal and job satisfaction because I'm helping others through difficult times. This service has helped me to appreciate that when one part of your life closes, for example due to things going wrong in health and work, there are always new avenues to explore.

I want to put something back and I enjoy having the opportunity to do this through my voluntary role.

