

Social Audit Report 2015- 2016 for Going For Independence CIC (GFI)

Company Registration date October 20th 2008 No. 6729549

Year 21st October 2015 to 20th October 2016

Part 1: Description of the company's activities and impact

Our core business

GFI is a National company with network links to a number of key national organisations that share our vision for people to be empowered to live independently with choice and control over their lives.

Our core business is to enable individuals of all ages, older people and people with physical or sensory impairments to be able to access independent advice and information to help them to live independently and safely with the best possible quality of life. We are advocates for the work of Independent Occupational Therapists (OTs) and facilitate connections between them and individuals in the community.

We support the social model of disability and specialise in being able to give people information about equipment and adaptations, including Telecare and electronic technology.

Investment for Community Benefit

1 Cards for older people and people with Dementia

Following consultation and discussion we started working with one of our Associate Members on the development of a set of cards for older people and those in the early stages of dementia which are based on the Wheel of Needs and which help people to recognise the things that are most important in their lives. The GFI website signposts to the Innate Needs online resources and in addition we are researching the potential for a board game to help people to express themselves through shared experiences and memories.

2 Independent OT Directory

In 2014 we invested a substantial sum of money in the development of an online Independent OT Directory, offering a free platform for OTs to promote their services which was accessible by the public. In late 2014 a competitor started up a directory but charged for an OT advert, as did the College of OT. Our investment was of definite value as we effectively influenced the market: the two online competitors then improved the quality of their offer – the College of OT directory was upgraded to make it easier to search, and the other online directory made their offer free to OTs.

As our income subsequently reduced and as the GFI online Directory incurred continuing costs, it was decided to close it by the end of March 2015 so that we could invest in other initiatives and trial the development of social activities in the community.

3 Directory of Independent Living Centres

The National organisation Assist UK was the umbrella body for Independent Living Centres around the UK, and through loss of core funding it was forced to close in 2015.

GFI now voluntarily lists the Independent Living Centres around the country on its website.

4 COESI membership

GFI continues to be a Member of the charity Centre of Excellence for Sensory Impairment (COESI), and provides a volunteer to manage their website content. Pam Bennett, the MD of GFI, is a Director on the COESI Board of Directors.

5 Work with the organisation Remap

In April 2016 GFI was approached by the Chief Executive of the National organisation Remap, which custom-makes equipment to help disabled people live more independent lives. They asked if we could circulate an email to all Independent OTs on our Directory promoting the work of Remap and we agreed to do this at no cost.

6 Social Activities in the community

Following the success of a voluntary pilot working with the COESI charity we are developing social activities for people with visual impairment using Art and Craft workshops, providing tailored sessions with support to people to enable them to participate. We are able to reach older people by building relationships and reducing their isolation.

7 Staff and Volunteer training

In 2015 GFI re-invested income from working on the One Precious Life project in 2014 in the employment of a member of staff part time to provide admin support and social media promotion. As part of the person's training GFI invested in a Train the Trainer course so that we can develop our offer of disability awareness training for organisations, which may lead to income generation in the future.

PART 2 – CONSULTATION WITH STAKEHOLDERS

The Company's stakeholders include a wide range of individuals and organisations: customers who use our helpline; Independent OTs; charity contacts; Associates; Advisory Board members and people in the community that we reach through social activities.

GFI is represented at the North of England Tees Sensory Support Services Network of charities and not for profit organisations providing services for people with sensory impairments, and through its membership of COESI is also linked with a similar network in London. We consult regularly with people in these networks and actions taken include listings of non-profit organisations providing complementary services. Our resource base has been updated this year and further developed following involvement in the One Precious Life Project in 2014.

Summary

Going For Independence continues to be a successful organisation which both directly and indirectly provides services for improving the health and wellbeing of people of all ages and abilities. The organisation is small and flexible with the ability to continually develop in innovative ways to ensure that it provides relevant and up to date information, community activities and support for people, helping them to live their lives independently and with dignity.

Pam Bennett - MD Going For Independence CIC
May 2017