

Case study

Sebastian Grzimek has got a lot out of volunteering with the Community Rehabilitation Service.



I volunteer as a Mentor with Bristol Mental Health's [Community Rehabilitation Service](#) and I'd definitely recommend it. I used to work in the hospitality industry but decided that I wanted to do something different. I grew up in a deprived area of Bristol and saw lots of people in the community who needed extra support. This played a role in me wanting to get into support work.

A few years ago I started working for [1625 Independent People](#), a charity that runs specialist services and projects to help young people who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless. I wanted to volunteer too so got in touch with Second Step, which runs the Community Rehabilitation Service.

When I began volunteering I was given two days of training which I felt very much prepared me for the role. Then I was matched with a service user. Second Step takes a lot of care selecting who they match you with and I and the other mentors I trained with felt they thought a lot about our individual personalities and lifestyles, before matching us with people we'd go well with. Before I even met my mentee I was given an idea of who they were and what their goals were for during our time together. This meant we could focus our time around achieving those goals and engaging with each other.

You can work with mentees for up to six months but I met with mine for an afternoon every week over four months, until they got discharged from services as they were doing so well. I helped them use the bus service and we joined in with walking groups. It was about supporting them with day-to-day activities and helping them to make connections.

While I've been volunteering I've had further training too. I've done psychologically informed environment training, mental health awareness training and I've got training around managing conflict and breakaway techniques coming up in June. I've also had group supervisions and one

-to-one supervisions, where I could talk about how things were going, share my experiences and work out if I need to tweak anything with my mentee to make the best use of our time together.

I've committed to a year of volunteering and I'm hoping to be matched with another mentee soon. I'd recommend volunteering with Second Step for lots of reasons. Primarily, because it feels great to give some time to do something for someone else. It's good experience if you're looking to build a career in the sector too. I've got a busy life with a part time job and small children but I'm glad that I found the time to do this.

Are you interested in becoming a Mentor? Find out [more](#).