

20

Timebanking Stories
from
Time Banks in the UK



**CELEBRATING
20 YEARS
September 2018**



STORY 1 - LONDON

Back From the Brink

Paul Wilson used to run his own business before marriage breakdown caused his descent into alcoholism and homelessness. He is now a Trustee of Broadway, the homelessness charity that helped him turn his life around through timebanking. He recently made a parachute jump raising £10,000 for the charity. He tells Time Bank Network News his story.

"Timebanking has been important to my recovery because it enables me to help others which is really good for my self esteem. My confidence has gone through the roof. I was a confident person before but going through a divorce and losing my business, it wipes it away from you. I donate my time credits because I do so many hours it would be impossible to claim all my credits. Last week, we had a guy doing haircuts join the time bank and I had a haircut – its one of the best haircuts I've had in my life! My biggest satisfaction is seeing other people use my credits. It enables people to try the time bank and realise they can contribute. It's so good to see other people getting involved and how diverse the membership is.

All of our clients at the Broadway have mental health problems, addiction problems or are homeless. Timebanking helps them reconnect with the community. It's not like going to college having to be in a classroom situation. These people have been battered, you stick them back in college and they feel totally out of place. With timebanking it is so casual and informal, it eases people back in and it's a great stepping stone to build confidence progressing into more formal voluntary work and then work. Instead of being taught it becomes self taught – the building of confidence.

I get a lot of people involved in the time bank. Clients listen to me because I used to be a client. I'm leading a co-production scheme at the moment which involves clients working together to design and re-design the



support services which Broadway offers so it's by the clients for the clients. Straight away we enrol them into the time bank and they really love that thing of getting involved. I've been working with Broadway 65 Hostel in Ealing. We've created a Community Action Group which through the time bank is contributing to the local community and enabling its members to reconnect to that community.

One thing I love about timebanking is it really helps vulnerable people. It is a safe place for people to build confidence to contribute – bringing people back out of their shell. I love the community spirit of it. If you volunteer you are limited to what you can do. Timebanking is so varied in what you can offer and receive. There is something for everyone with timebanking.

I would love a paid job but I want to do what I'm doing now. I'm not sure anyone would pay me as I'm so far out of the box! I would love to work for the time bank. In May I won the Inspirational Board or Cabinet Member of Year. Winning the award was a humbling experience. I went to the Hilton Hotel on Park Lane to receive it. Everyone was cheering and clapping and shouting! It was the first time an ex homeless person has ever won. Then the week after that I jumped out of an aeroplane!

STORY 2 - GLOUCESTERSHIRE

Former librarian Anna Bloomfield was worried that, once she retired, she'd miss the bustle and interest of her job, and all the people she worked with and helped during her working day. And although, as a talented artist and gardener with many friends, she knew she wouldn't be short of things to do in retirement, she felt it was important to do something for her community.

"There is always a slight concern that you might become lonely as you get older," said Anna, from Stroud. "So I decided to look outwards, rather than retreat."

A chance meeting in the town with Chris Moore from Fair Shares - a regular visitor to the library where Anna once worked - has opened up a new world for her through Fair Shares.

"I went to a couple of Fair Shares meetings where we talk about projects we could get involved with," said Anna. "They mentioned a sheltered housing complex where volunteers were needed to befriend some of the residents. I started going there regularly and got to know some of the residents and then began helping out their volunteer warden - and it all snowballed!"

Since then, Anna has helped organise trips for residents, and, with her friend and fellow Fair Shares volunteer Pat Sykes, gets involved with singing sessions at the complex. Helping out at The Beeches has led in turn to leading a series of dementia-friendly walks held over the summer months, meeting at Stroud's Museum in the Park.

"The idea of the walks came from the Dementia Adventure initiative in Essex," said Anna. "Fair Shares organised two training sessions and first aid training and we worked together to plan the walks for older people and those with dementia to enjoy."



"It has been wonderful helping people and their carers get outdoors for a change for a gentle stroll, with the sun on their faces and even the odd drop of rain - we often find ourselves singing together! Sometimes people get stuck inside in their own homes, or in a care home, and forget what it's like to smell the flowers and feel the breeze."

Anna is happy to volunteer for all sorts of Fair Shares projects. "I like the whole principle of Fair Shares, doing something for your own community," she added. "What I also like is that I can balance my volunteering with enjoying my garden, painting and meeting friends. Fair Shares has opened up a whole new world of friendship, with no chance of ever being lonely!"

STORY 3 - LONDON

"I found out about HOurBank at an event at the Copleston centre, I started talking to some of the volunteers and they encouraged me to join HOurBank and I haven't looked back since. HOurBank has brought out my confidence and given me a place to develop. We have interesting discussions about topics and activities at our coffee mornings that I enjoy.

An activity I enjoyed was to go to an antiques fair in Battersea. People were asking me who made my clothes and asking me where I bought them, but I made them myself. I never thought I'd be able to sew because of negative words that were said to me. After this encouragement I saw a sewing machine and thought its time to learn how to sew. HOurBank has been beautiful, consistent and uplifting for me and I really appreciate it."

Rachel made the jacket she is wearing in this picture.



STORY 4 – ISLE OF WIGHT

Timebanking really is a case that it's not just about money, rather it is about our members, their strengths, gifts and time which make the perfect combination to build relationships within our community.

We have a broad membership age from 25 to 89 years and one of my main roles as coordinator is to try and work with individual members to find out both what they would like to offer or receive, and the details of where, how and at what level. Many times, I meet with the same response when people first join... 'I'd love to give but I don't think I have any skills that others would want'. This now has become something I see as a reflection of the times we live in, where people have stopped feeling valued for who they are, lose confidence in their abilities which in extreme situations can lead to feelings of helplessness or depression.

One of my members joined when she was in her 80's as she wanted help to visit the local hairdresser, but as she had really poor mobility and found the volunteer services in our area could not offer any help, particularly as her wheelchair was really too heavy to lift into a car. After discussions we arranged for a



her home to the car. This worked for about 6 months, with occasional trips to the hairdresser, but she was concerned that she hadn't given anything back, despite reassurance that there would be a time when this would all fall into place, and she could offer some of her strengths. She was rather sceptical of this, as she seemed to feel disempowered having to rely on carers coming into her home 3 times a day to help her.

Through chatting on our visits to the hairdressers, she mentioned that in her younger days, she had been a domestic science teacher, and as we had just been given a community garden to grow vegetables, it became clear that there really was a great offer she could make to other members...so, with her carer she found a delicious favourite recipe for a simple potato pie, and they typed it up (earning time credits for doing so) and as this was the only crop we managed to harvest, it gave me great pleasure to put it into the monthly newsletter for members to use with the shared produce.

It's the little things like this that make my role so wonderful!

Sally, West Wight Time Bank



wheelchair to be at the hairdressers where there was a steep slope, and she used a walking aid to get from

STORY 5 - LONDON

T was found by long time and active member M when she was putting her rubbish out, he was attempting to sleep in the bin shed of her flats. As a recent refugee to the UK T had lost his family, his profession and his dignity, had very little English and no one to ask for help. M persuaded him to come along with her to the time bank office where he got a cup of tea and some friendly faces. The broker then helped M arrange an appointment with the council, and she and the broker took him along to the appointment to get some emergency housing sorted out. Members donated clothing and kitchen appliances to help get T settled, and he became a regular face at Timebank events. Offering gardening and DIY he became very popular!

Timebank member S was retired from teaching due to ill health but looking to keep active, to help with her depression and to “feel useful”. She started to teach T English conversation as he helped her out with her garden which used to be her pride and joy. Several years later T is now happily married and S is a very happy surrogate ‘grandma’ to his two young children!

STORY 6 - CUMBRIA

Kat has a full-time job working irregular hours at a local nursing home, which means that she can't plan ahead very far. She has lived locally for some years and has struggled to get involved because of her work commitments, though likes being able to help when she is free. Kat joined the timebank in February 2018 and has done all sorts of things since.

Kat buddied up with another timebanker who was looking for someone to accompany her for walks, especially post a knee operation, so she could go on different and longer walks to help her recuperation. For Kat this also meant being able to see other parts of the local area, because she doesn't have a car.

Kat has also helped put up shelves, tends the troughs outside the Community and Business Hub (of which the Timebank is a part) - weeding and tending the herbs and led an egg decorating session for Easter, at our community lunch introducing other timebankers to a traditional activity from Kat's native Poland.

Kat has now spent her time credits on a Chinese brush making workshop, as she enjoys arts and crafts and has met some new friends as well. Kat at the Chinese brush painting and egg decorating sessions



STORY 7 – NORTH YORKSHIRE

Sam - As a disabled member of Settle's community, being part of the Timebank has allowed Sam the opportunity to be involved in the community. Pain and generally poor health often dictate what Sam can participate in and the Timebank gives her the flexibility to participate as and when she is able.

On several occasions the Timebank has given Sam the opportunity to participate in events that she would not otherwise have been able to afford. Using Timebank credits, that Sam earned, she has been able to utilise workshops held at Settle Community and Business Hub, in particular a Year Planning Workshop and Chinese Brush Painting. Sam has also been able to use credits for several sessions of EFT Tapping which have enabled her to better manage her social anxiety.

Additionally, the Timebank allowed Sam to get away with her wife for a rare weekend by allowing her to arrange for guinea pig sitters for the duration. Sam was able to earn Timebank credits by hub-sitting for



Settle Community and Business Hub which has further allowed her to get out in the community and greatly reduce the feeling of isolation that she frequently battles with. Sam hopes to continue to use the Timebank in the future to increase her social skills

STORY 8- NOTTINGHAM

My A* Exchange - Myself and my son have Dyspraxia, a learning disability that basically means that you have poor mental and physical co-ordination. This gives rise to untidy hand writing and a need to work slowly at school. We also like to talk a lot, in fact the diagnosis that I had showed that my communication skills are far better than my organisational skills.

At Secondary School my son Sam had his heart set on going to University and his best subjects were sciences, so he needed Higher Maths GCSE, to study sciences for A level. However, myself and the Special Educational Needs Teacher decided that he should only take Foundation level when he was 16, so he was not overwhelmed with work.

Sam was accepted into the school Sixth Form College to do a BTEC course to prove that he could work hard enough to study A Levels. Unfortunately, we then discovered that they didn't teach Higher GCSE Maths, but they could enter him for the exam. Fortunately, I belonged to our local Time Bank. I put out a request for help and lovely Gemma De Brito came to our aid. She had a Maths degree. Gemma worked for a local Housing Association and came after work nearly every week between the end of November 2010 and the exam in June 2011. Fortunately, I had plenty of Time Credits to cover this as I was doing weekly reception work for one of our group members. One of the things that Gemma did was listen to Sam talk. I would hear them chattering away for 5 or 10 minutes, then they would get down to work. Gemma said that she really enjoyed these conversations and found him very interesting. She also put a lot of effort into preparing him for the exam.

The result? Sam didn't just pass his Higher Maths GCSE, he got an A star. A far better result than for any of the GCSEs that he studied for at school. He has now passed his A Levels, completed a Physics Degree at Leicester De Montfort University and is studying for a master's Degree in physics at Loughborough University. To me the Skills Exchange has been a life line, on this and several other occasions. When there was no funding left to employ a Time Broker I struggled, with other members to keep it going and now I am the Time Broker myself.



STORY 9 - LONDON

"I was going to college to learn computer skills, but I got fed up and stopped going. I'd just sit indoors watching television and look at the walls all day, it made me feel very down.

I found out about HOurBank through Tim [my keyworker] from Keyring. Tim showed me one of the HOurBank monthly newsletters and helped me to apply to become a member. When I joined HOurBank it made me feel happy because I enjoy talking to people and being in a friendly environment.

I enjoy the cafes because I get to talk to people about their day and have a nice cup of tea. The community cafes are great, and I really like the concert at St Georges on Thursdays.

Some of my favourite activities with HOurBank have been going to the museum and going to the theatre. One of my favourite exchanges was with the Teens and Toddlers Young Leaders group when they taught me how to write text messages on my mobile phone.

The information session on debt management gave me understanding on how to get help and advice if I needed it.

HOurBank has helped me to go out and meet people and helped to stop me from being lonely I'm thankful to have these experiences in my community."



STORIES 10, 11, 12 - SOUTHAMPTON

VISITING IN HOSPITAL AND AT HOME

A physically disabled member who is unable to walk went into hospital to have an operation on her neck. Three different time bank members visited her on different occasions (two of them visiting twice). Now that she is home, the same time bank members have agreed to visit her there and take in any shopping she may need.

HELPING AT HOME WHEN SOMEONE IS IN HOSPITAL

A member went into hospital to have a knee replacement. Whilst he was in hospital and rehab one of our members, along with one of his neighbours, fed and walked his dog. On his return home, our member continued to walk his dog, prepared him some meals, did laundry and some tidying. As the gentleman didn't have that many accrued hours, the other member donated her hours back to him.

HELP ACCOMPANYING A PERSON TO GET OUT AFTER HOSPITAL

An elderly member (in her 70's), who uses a walking stick, went into hospital to have an operation on her hand. The hospital advised her not to use the hand that was operated on for a month. This meant she was unable to hold the lead for her dog when taking him out for his daily walk. I organised (via their carer) for one of our members who has learning disabilities to go out with her for one hour a day to hold the dog's lead until the lady's hand was healed.



STORY 13 – ESSEX

I'd like to tell you the story of David.

I received a call from one of our Local Area Coordinators asking if Time Bank Thurrock could help support someone in the local community. The gentleman was in his 60s, had been bedbound for 8 years and recently had both legs amputated. He'd been allocated an adapted property but had no way of moving himself or his belongings as he didn't have any support from friends or family. He was in a truly desperate situation.

I sent out an email to all Time Bank members and within 10 mins I'd received several emails offering help. We had Time Bank members go around and sort through David's belongings and then go back another day and pack. A local organisation that supports adults with extra needs donated a van and a driver for the day so that the Time Bank could move the gentleman. On the day of the move Time Bank members and a local church went to the property, loaded all of David's belongings onto the van and moved him into his new flat.

One of the Time Bank members that helped with the move knew someone living in the block of flats where David moved to, so he organised a 'get together' to welcome him into his new home. The Time Bank member then went to visit David every week. This also helped the Time Bank member as he'd had to give up work due to poor health. The resident that lived in the block of flats also made David a Christmas dinner, the first he'd had in 5 years! At last he felt part of a community.

When I spoke to David he said Time Bank Thurrock had made such a difference to his life. He said, "I laid in that bed all them years thinking nobody cared, but people do, even strangers."



STORY 14 - LONDON

Kara's Story

I first came across HOurBank when I went to one of their Mend & Repair [Bring and Fix] sessions (at my local church). I brought along a n electrical fan with a broken frame, a lamp which wasn't working and a necklace which needed re-stringing. To my surprise and amazement, the gifted and friendly team managed to fix all my items. It was therefore a very easy job for Naomi to sign me up to this wonderful, giving and sharing community group.



Due to single-handedly looking after my parents, who had coronary disease and Parkinson's, the garden had been sadly neglected.

HOurBank have a dedicated Gardening team who initially took on the mammoth task of hewing a path through the overgrown jungle and painstakingly weeding, hoeing, digging up, pulling out and disposing of all the unwanted debris. Latterly, AH and MJ spent a considerable amount of time honing and whatever the gardening term is for "fine-tuning" the garden. This included painting the back wall, applying preservative to the shed, digging, turning and rotovating the soil, measuring out and seeding a lawn and planting a range of flowering bulbs and fruit and vegetables. They created a beautiful, colourful and aromatic garden with side-helpings of beetroot, tomatoes, peppers, chillies, peaches, blueberries, strawberries, raspberries and redcurrants. It truly is an amazing transfor mation and something I had neither the knowledge, experience nor capability of achieving myself due to arthritis and back problems.

I was so happy and overwhelmed with all the help and kindness which I was being given by so many members of the group, but I said to Naomi, "I'm so grateful for all this help but I really don't think I have any skill which I can give in return". Naomi said, "Don't worry, I KNOW you have a skill and we will discover it together". True to her word Naomi helped me to discover that I had a knack and coincidentally gained tremendous satisfaction and enjoyment from helping members who are struggling with computers to develop their skills and gain confidence in that area. [Through the council Digital Champions scheme].



I would never have started teaching people if it wasn't for the time banks and now I really enjoy the interaction. It really does feel good when I'm walking in the street and see people I'm teaching or who have helped me, and we call out to each other and if we have time we stop and have a chat and a catch-up. That is particularly important to me as I don't have any family in the UK and it means so much to know that there are group members, who are now friends, that I know I can call on to help both practically and in other ways. It breaks up the loneliness and isolation that can otherwise bring you down and instead brings on a feeling of involvement and community which

STORY 15 – YORK

“Our story is about Debbie who is registered disabled and lives alone, she use to have her garden looked after by an elderly gentleman who lived close by, but sadly he recently died. Her garden started to get a bit overgrown and she wanted to have 3 rotting trellises removed. York Timebank came to the rescue by removing the trellises and arranging for York Good Gym to jog round and cut them up ready for recycling. York Timebank to the rescue and working hand in hand with York Good Gym.”

STORY 16 – ST NEOTS CAMBRIDGESHIRE

The Power of Timebanking.

There are so many story's that illustrate how St Neots Timebank has changed people's lives in one way or other. They all portray how timebanking has helped people – some with a job they can no longer do or stopping someone feeling so lonely up to completely changing a life.



Terry joined St Neots TimeBank on 24th March 2014 – he had and was suffering from dark clinical periods of depression and had done so for the past 32 years. Terry's achievements show timebanking is such a powerful tool making life easier and happier for members of the community. Our Website, events and monthly Newsletter tell of successes and the benefits which is still bringing (to this day) new members – 206 and still growing.

Terry started by fitting a down pipe to a water butt – it took just 2 hours but 2 hours that changed his life. This encouraged him to offer to help others as he found the members to be such friendly people and grateful of his help. During conversation we felt it would help Terry to be involved even more and consequently asked him to join our Advisory Group. There were many dips with the depression but offering gardening jobs seemed to pull him up again, growing plants is his main hobby and speciality.

Terry has completed a recorded total of 180 hours of mainly gardening and DIY, with providing transport and woodworking projects. Feedback from all his tasks has praised his skills and friendliness. Over the years he has got stronger and able to meet with more and more people as time went on. He has also spoken with other people that are suffering from depression to help them overcome the dark and lonely times. This has helped the TimeBank by having someone that's been there and understands.

Terry and his wife now deliver our mail to members, which includes our monthly Newsletter. He has also encouraged his wife to make a fruit cake monthly for our coffee mornings.

Terry now loves to be busy and he loves working in his garden. He has occasionally grown some plants for the TimeBank to sell – donating the funds to the TimeBank. He also found that he enjoyed making small leather goods – key holders, purses, pen holders even a leather bookmark to name a few. Again, Terry donates the funds from selling these to the TimeBank. He does this as he says the TimeBank completely changed his life where medication had failed.

To show just how much the TimeBank has helped Terry he sent us an email saying, “Thank you TimeBank for Christmas – it's been 32 years since I've experienced and enjoyed the Christmas celebrations.”

Terry, at 75 years old, continues to attend our meetings and events, he also helps with other things when he can. When changing his house around he donated many items of furniture, which prompted the Coordinator to start a service "Someone's rubbish is someone else's treasure" This has been extremely popular and continues to make many members happy – all due to Terry's generosity. He still finds it hard to talk to strangers on the phone but is happy to chat in person.

This year Terry promised us a Garden sale. We were all astounded by what he meant – he had grown 235 perianal plants which were all sold to raise funds for the TimeBank. His leather goods also had a stall at our event and raised a lot of interest. We were lost for words. We named him our star member. His reply to this was that he gets so much pleasure from making and growing these for us – and reminded us that just over 4 years ago he wouldn't have managed to do it! The change is just remarkable and almost unbelievable.

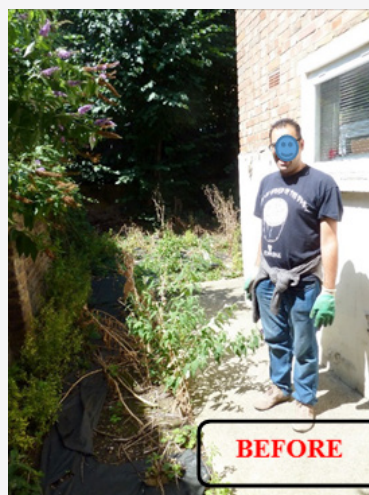
Unfortunately, after the plants were sold, this year, Terry took a dive (his words "the black dog had returned") However keeping in contact he has reached a point that he could come and visit us– in his words "just because you are who you are – TimeBank". He sat and told us all about his feelings and how it affects not only him but his family, which must have taken a lot of courage, we even had a laugh together.... he's on the mend once again.



STORY 17 - LONDON

Bob and Pierre exchanged their gardening skills with Dawn to help clear her garden. Dawn has a very bad back and finds bending very difficult, she also has mental health issues and not much money. Having her garden cleared using time credits she has earned baking cakes is great for her well-being as it means she can go out and enjoy her garden without feeling stressed about the weeds.

Bob has slight learning difficulties and Pierre has autism. They "enjoyed using their skills to help someone and seeing the finished product felt good"



STORY 18 – MANCHESTER

Colman Coss (Colm) has a history of mental health problems and alcoholism and was referred to Manchester's Roby Timebank as part of a Back to Work programme. He approached the exercise with scepticism and reluctance, waiting for the moment when he could 'escape gracefully'. It didn't happen and 9 months later he's still a member. Here is his story.

"When the time bank was explained to me, I really liked the idea because it is about helping people. There is no agenda, no profit and I'm really keen on this. My background is in administration and accounts and I'm good at things like English comprehension so I offered these skills and basic DIY. Since joining the time bank I've helped with the newsletter and at an open day. I've also helped promote the time bank by leafleting in my community. Time banking has helped me because at least once a week I do actually get out and meet people and do things. Without the time bank I would just be on my own. For me it has added a positive thing to my life which I look forward to. My confidence has increased. For a brief time when I'm doing something with the time bank I get the feeling that 'yes I can achieve things, I'm not an utter mess'. For me that is good. It has a knock-on effect. It gives me a reason to get up and have a shower and leave the house which reminds me that this whole life thing isn't that bad.



Before the time bank I wasn't doing anything like that. I was very isolated. Not only am I feeling better now, I'm having a positive impact on some other people as well. I've met new people and I've been helping out one time bank member with practical things like sorting out bills and telephone contracts.

I'm happy to throw my hand in with anything which comes up such as jewellery making or gardening. I was able to help someone else recently plant some seeds because she was struggling which was great. I get totally engrossed and I have fun! I think it's what they call a 'soft outcome', not something you can put on a spreadsheet to say what it achieves. It just makes you feel good.

I asked for guidance on gardening from the time bank. I've got a back garden and it's a wasteland so I've been learning about how I can convert it into a space where I can grow food. I've learnt about different crops and planting cycles and composting and mulching soil. I had no idea about these things before. I've started making compost and I now know a little bit about cultivating seeds. Before this I had no idea where to start. Now I've just got to do the work and I may ask for help from the time bank to get me started. One member of the time bank has already given me a rake and a shovel.

This is why I choose to keep doing it. It is like having a function again in life. I wasn't always the way I am now but I've been in a mess for several years. It reminds me that once upon a time I was capable of doing things. Hopefully I will be able to look back on this in the future and think 'well yeah, that was one of the elements that got me out of the situation, out of a rut'. I hope so.

I've found some contentment in helping other people and I've learnt some really good things myself. Having a vegetable garden will be great in all senses, economically great and it is also another activity which I'll be doing for myself at home. It probably sounds a bit obvious but watching something grow from a seed into a plant – I've never been able to do that – if I manage to achieve that there is a real thing that is happening – a life that I'm responsible for. It's very satisfying to do that and I'll be able to share my produce with my neighbours too.

Timebanking isn't something I would want to stop doing even if all my problems disappeared. It is a great idea and should be more widely known than it is. All it needs is people. Everyone has got something to offer even if they think they haven't. I think it's something the government could support without having to spend a lot of money and the rewards they would get back would far outweigh any investment they put in."

STORY 19 – STOCKPORT

Bridget joined the Give2Gain Timebank in January 2015 soon after being discharged from hospital after having had a hip replacement. Her son contacted us as he had heard that we might be able to help her get some of her independence back, after her surgery.

With the help of other Give2Gain Timebank Members, Bridget was able to regain her confidence and, within weeks was able to walk up and down stairs at home.



Bridget was able to get some help and support in attending Outpatient appointments. A couple of Timebank members organised to take her to the hospital, stay with her and help her navigate her way through the hospital system. This saved Bridget having to organise, wait for and attend the hospital by ambulance, which she was frightened to do. She did say that had she had to rely on an ambulance, she probably would not have attended her Outpatient Clinic appointments, as all her family lived some distance from her and could not take her. She also really appreciated the company and friendship and said that she felt much safer going to the hospital with Timebank Members she had got to know.

On another occasion, Bridget had to be admitted, because of a fall she had at home. As a result of the time bank Scheme, the nurse in the Accident and Emergency (A&E) Department was able to call the Timebank Broker after Bridget had given the nurse her Home from Hospital contact card. The Timebank Broker was then able to contact a couple of Timebank Members, who Bridget had named as being willing to help her, should she end up in hospital.

Within an hour, both Members had visited Bridget and sorted out what she needed. They had contacted her son, gone to her home to get some clothes and then returned, to the hospital, to keep her company. Luckily, once seen in A&E and, because the staff knew that Bridget could get home and that someone would be making sure she was alright, she was discharged home. Her two Timebank companions took her home, made sure the house was warm and food available and also did some shopping for her. Over the next couple of days, they kept her company until she felt able to manage by herself.

Overall Bridget felt that she had really benefited from the Scheme and was sure that she would have been admitted if she did not have the support from the Give2GainTimebank. In exchange, Bridget arranged for her son to take them all out for afternoon tea as a thanks to her Timebank friends.

STORY 20 - BATH

Dennis was 56 and was a Time Bank member. He was referred by Social Services and the Local Police as he had high support needs, could not read or write and often got into trouble with the law.

Since joining the time bank he got involved in a number of time exchanges for local people helping with DIY, painting, gardening, admin jobs and anything else he felt he can do to help someone else. Dennis was learning to read and write (one to one) with another Time Bank volunteer to spend his time credits and he also went to the local football matches, had a hair cut and received help in his flat. Every morning he brought his post to the time bank for other members to read to him and help him sort out any issues or respond accordingly.



Dennis said "I feel more cheerful now than I did just sitting indoors watching the TV. I am staying out of the pub and am staying out of trouble by being kept busy and my mind is on other things. Not only that but I am getting to meet new friendly people."

Dennis had the opportunity to travel to London with the Time Bank to talk at an event on mental health, co-production and time banking. Dennis said "It was a great day. I really enjoyed it."



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