Advice, Guidance and Advocacy case studies- various projects:

Case Study 1:

Through healthy Steps I was able to help out a young, single mother from a Polish background. Her English language skills are not great, and she has some communication issues. The fist time I have supported her was in November, I have helped her complete an online food hygiene course so that she could improve her employment opportunities, with my help she gained a level 2 certificate in food hygiene.

In December, she was very grateful for my support because she found a weekend job. However, she did not know if she was able to get free prescriptions for her and her son. I have had a one-to-one session with the individual and explained that her son’s prescriptions will be free, and she will have to complete a low-income scheme form for help with prescription charges. The next day I have went to the nearest pharmacy and asked for the form, I set up an appointment with her so that we could fill it out together. She came in the next day and we spend a couple of hours together filling out the low-income scheme form, she needed my help with it as she could not understand the questions herself, she didn’t know such form existed and she was very grateful for the information and support I have provided.

The individual asked me for help again in January, she lives in an accommodation for young single parents and she would like to find her own flat in Sunderland. I have explained to her that she would be able to get a council flat for her and her son and will be able to receive housing benefit as well. She then booked an appointment with me so that I could support her with filling out an online Gentoo application. We started filling it out together and now I would also like to help her apply for other housing organisations such as Bernicia so that she gets her flat soon and has a permanent address.

The individual has been very pleased with the support of healthy steps as the project improved her knowledge of wellbeing services and her lifestyle.

Without Healthy steps the individual wouldn’t be able to complete the online food hygiene course, apply for low income scheme prescription help and wouldn’t be able to apply for housing. I am going to continue support her and her child to lead a healthier lifestyle.

Case Study 2:

I have helped out an individual whose current status is temporary leave to remain and he’s a refugee. He is in a difficult situation as his family lives abroad and he lives with a friend, he’s English is good enough for me to communicate with him but sometimes has difficulties understanding English, he has some difficulties in reading and writing in English.

He had a few problems that he needed my help with, he first asked me for support in January, he needed advice with benefits- He works part time and I told him he might be able to receive working tax credit, we filled out a form online and couple of days later set up an appointment to fill out his form with him. On the same day, the individual told me he has housing issues, his friend wanted him to move out as soon as possible. I have decided to go to the council with him and ask for advice, we made a call and found out that he can not do anything until he is homeless. Couple of days later he spoke to his friend and agreed that he will be able to stay until the end of the month.

Additionally, I helped out this individual to book an appointment in the bank and set up his online banking app to make his life a little easier. I have been there for emotional support and will be continuing to support this individual further with improving his lifestyle, physical and emotional

Case Study 3:

Thanks to healthy steps I was able to help out a couple (the male is from Italy and the female is from Poland: both have lived in Sunderland for 2-3 years) the couple did not speak any English, they both work in an Italian restaurant where they speak in Italian and they have been quite excluded from the society.

They came to ICOS for help in January 2018 because they have been experiencing some health problems including eczema and difficulty breathing (she was never registered with the doctor in the UK before and has been living here for three years, she always went to A&E when she had a health problem). Her recent health issues have been caused by damp in their flat and a leaking roof. The issues with their flat sounded very serious to me and I decided to support them further.

I have asked the couple to show me the state of their flat (which was privately rented from a Landlord). The couple showed me pictures and videos of the flat and I knew it was in a very bad state, there was a hole in the roof, it was leaking, the other bedroom was damp and mouldy, and the place was not safe to live in. I contacted their landlord on few occasions and asked for repairs to be made, my requests have been ignored. I also contacted the council and explained the situation, someone from the council got in touch with me on the same day and went to visit the flat. After the visit, they rang me back and I’ve been told that the flat was dangerous to live in, not only there have been health hazards but also fire hazards in the flat. I got advised that the couple should move out on the same day, I have went to the council with the couple to see if they could get any temporary accommodation. Unfortunately, the council could not provide them accommodation and it has been Easter bank holiday weekend so they got told they could stay over in their flat till Tuesday when council re-opens but the condition was for them to stay on the living room floor and they weren’t allowed to go upstairs in any of the bedrooms. The following week we have registered the couple with Bernicia Group and they managed to get a lovely flat.

Once they moved into their new flat I helped them to get floors and furniture from the council as the couple could not afford new items. Then, I registered them for the doctors near their new flat so that they could get help with her health problems caused by the damp in their old flat.

The couple have been very grateful for my help as they now feel safe in their flat and their health issues have improved. The process of support lasted from January 2018 till May 2018 but now the couple feels confident enough to carry on with their lives and their physical and mental health has improved as they did not have to worry about the issues with their housing and they got help from the doctors with their health issues such as eczema and breathing problems which was caused by damp environment.

Case Study 4:

I have helped out an individual who came in to the UK two years ago, he’s English language skills are poor and he does not have many close friends that could support him in Sunderland.

The individual’s employment ended in April 2018 because his company could not afford to pay him SSP (Statutory Sick Pay) any longer, he came to healthy steps for support because he didn’t know what he could do next. I have contacted his employers and explained that he did not receive his holiday pay, they agreed to pay him the money for holiday pay but there was not much that could have been done about his SSP. I referred the individual to welfare rights service and attended the appointment with him, he had been given advice on what he could do next.

I have supported the individual to apply for ESA (Employment and Support Allowance) and registered him for Gentoo housing as he lived with a friend, we decided it would be best for the individual to have his own place as he’s awaiting operation for his back and if he got his own place, he could also apply for housing benefit which could help his financial inclusion.

After many complications with ESA he finally managed to get his benefit and he received his own Gentoo flat in Sunderland, he feels a lot happier now having his own place and his situation has improved.

Along the way, I also supported him with making doctor’s appointment and consultations at the hospital for his operation, as well as getting him a translator for his appointments.

I am continuously supporting the individual with his issues. And our next steps will be applying for a doctor near his new flat and finding out a date for his surgery so that he could get better and go back to work. The individual has been very pleased with the support he has received from Healthy Steps and ICOS. The individual now feels more independent having his own flat and feels more confident attending some of his appointments and making telephone calls on his own.

Case Study 5:

Through Health 24/7 I have supported a female, mother of two living in Sunderland North, her English was good however, and she needed support and advice about her health, discrimination at work and financial inclusion.

We had our first appointment back in January, she wanted to get some advice about SSP (Statuary Sick Pay) she was on a zero hour contract and her agency told her they would not pay it. I have gotten some advice for her from ACAS (Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service) and Citizen advice, all organisations I have spoken to, told us there was no reason why she shouldn’t be paid SSP from her employers. I have wrote some letters for her and sent them off (to the HMRC and Employers- Zenith People). We had no reply form anyone.

Once the individual started trusting me more and realised I am there to help and listen she opened up to me and told me how she was discriminated at work, there have been numerous incidents where it was classed as both: racial discrimination (other employers being rude to her and bullying her because she is Polish) and health discrimination (she suffers from heart disease and her employers did not let her take medication at work on numerous occasions). She told me that she had to stay off work and go on the medical certificate because she could not handle being discriminated anymore, she got really bad mental health problems triggered by discrimination at work and she didn’t know where to ask for support.

I have given the individual a lot of advice on her mental health and asked her if she would like me to refer her to any organisation or counselling service, her English is very good so she manged to do that herself through a doctor a while ago. However, I referred her to the welfare rights service in Sunderland and council and attended the appointment with her, they have given her individual support with her discrimination at work and wrote an appeal for her to receive her SSP. We are now waiting for a decision but in the mean time I offered to give her support with an application for ESA, she decided she does not want to peruse that and instead she would slowly like to get back into work, she has also asked me for advice if she should apply for a part-time job in Subway, I told her that I thought it was a great idea if she feels well enough to do it. The individual accepted the job offer and is now happier, she feels that she will not have to carry on being on a medical certificate and she is now well enough to go out in the community and meet new people.