



# The Wise Owl

The [athena](#) Project Newsletter

## New Mentors Begin

### athena News

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On 27th August, the second batch of [athena](#) mentors graduated with an award ceremony at Hexagon. There are now 13 mentors working on the [athena](#) Project: you can see some of the activities that they have been doing over the page. Mentors meet clients for an hour or two each week, and help them make the move from supported living to independent housing.

There is a good mixture of gender, ethnicity, sexuality in the mentor team, as you can see in the photo below and of course everyone has lived experience of mental health issues.



L to R: Janet (tutor), Maria, Dean, Angela (Hexagon), Chris, Montse, Carlita, Olu, Faith, Jacq, Cheryl, Valerie, Heather (tutor)

## Training Opportunities

There is further training available with [athena](#). Contact the Project Coordinator if you want to find out more about getting involved:

- training in **Mentoring** in April 2016. This will look at the role of the mentor in some depth.
- We run a course called **Train the Trainers** for people who want to deliver training.
- People who have gained a Baseline Recognition certificate to begin work can upgrade to **Full Recognition**– this is a higher level award.

Hexagon

Southwark  
Council

## A Service User's Story

The priority for **athena** is the people we support. We have a mentor called Catherine who started working with us a few months ago. She supports a lady called **Donna**, who has kindly written something about the support she gets from her mentor:

**"I was living in supported accommodation, but the accommodation was only for a few years then you have to move on.**

**I was allocated a worker from the Athena Project who helped me move into a one bedroom flat, but I experienced difficulty with rent which she is helping me with.**

**Catherine helped me a lot, because without her I wouldn't be able to do it on my own.**

**She comes once a week and helps me with my benefits, gas, electric and setting up my tv. She helps me to take the bus and goes with me to my appointments and meetings, because I don't like public transport. I prefer to take cab, but she's shown me**

**how much I can save not using cab to go everywhere."**

If you would like to find out more about becoming a mentor, contact John Lake, whose details are over the page.

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**"Catherine helped me a lot, because without her I wouldn't be able to do it on my own "**

**Donna**

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Catherine, Donna's mentor

## Activities on the project

Mentors have been helping people with the process of bidding for flats, and with preparing to move from care homes into flats of their own. They have been meeting people for cups of coffee and getting to know them, and finding

activities the person wants to do in the community.

The important thing about the mentors is that they are not being 'leaders' but letting the clients make decisions and choices.

## Recovery College Presentation– by Ian, a mentor

“I was recently offered employment as a peer mentor by Hexagon Housing Association’s athena Project, after completing the Baseline Recognition course in March. I gladly accepted, met my first two peers shortly afterwards and began working with them in late June.

On 18th of June, I was invited by John Lake, the project coordinator, to meet some potential candidates at the Recovery College. This is run at the Employment Academy in Peckham by South London and Maudsley (SLaM) and offers educational opportunities to people who’ve had mental health issues.

I had to talk to people about how to get involved as a mentor and opportunities for career development for those who wish to pursue further employment. I talked about my own experience, such as compiling a portfolio (a personal summary detailing the voluntary work



Ian Grant, a mentor

I have done over the past seven years). For his part, John made excellent use of a projector to illustrate the project’s basic components and to summarise Athena’s general ethos.

The five participants were from a variety of backgrounds and a few of them have already



supported vulnerable persons within their respective capacities. They seemed to have a genuine interest in the project, as well as a positive attitude with regards to the role of the mentor. We would like to thank them and wish them all the very best of luck in their endeavors.”

**020 3228 3643**

**[www.slamrecoverycollege.co.uk](http://www.slamrecoverycollege.co.uk)**

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“I had to talk to people about how to get involved as a mentor and my own experience”

Ian

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## Wellbeing Hub

This is a new mental health service for people in Southwark, run by Together:



you can contact them if you need to talk things through with someone, if you need longer-term support, or if you just want to join a group, take part in local activities and meet other

people who share your interests. Maybe you want to find out more about Personal Budgets and how to purchase support.

It happens at **Thames Reach Employment Academy, 29 Peckham Road, London, SE5 8UA** and some other sites around the borough.

The Wellbeing Hub are sending us service users and new mentors– thank you!

Hexagon Housing  
Association  
130-136 Sydenham  
Road  
London SE26 5JY



John Lake

**The athena Project is designed to provide peer support to people in Southwark with mental health issues who are looking to move out of supported living into independent housing. It is being set up with money from Southwark Council's Innovation Fund and trains people with personal experience of mental health difficulties to become paid mentors.**

**This quarterly newsletter aims to keep people informed about the progress of the Project and to keep interested people connected. For more information contact John Lake on the details below.**

John Lake  
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www.hexagon.org.uk/athena

Hexagon

