

Spot Light - Kingston Eco Op

Healthwatch Kingston is an independent charity - its aim is to listen to what people have to say about their health and social services- and feed this information back to the service providers.

This is a benefit to everyone involved, because it shines a light on what's good about services, and also involves the people at the heart of the services to make suggestions and provide ways which could help make them even better.

Spot Light is just one of the ways which Healthwatch Kingston does this; on Thursday 24th September Sophie Bird, Healthwatch Community Engagement Officer and Victoria Anaele, Healthwatch Volunteer visited Eco op from 10.am until 12.30pm.

We spoke to talk to Eco Op Clients, Volunteers and the staff team. Kingston Eco op wanted Healthwatch to do a visit, so they could find out what their clients really think about the service they provide.

About Kingston Eco Op

Eco Op is a social enterprise scheme offering a range of different activities that aim to effect personal and social change by;

- Reducing isolation
- Increasing self confidence and esteem
- Developing skills for self-help, mutual support and gaining qualifications
- Educating and caring about the environment
- Creating opportunities for employment

- The activities clients take part in are ;
 - Fixing, restoring and selling bikes
 - Assembling charity poppies
 - Assembling cardboard boxes.



On our visit

We spoke to 11 clients of Eco Op, one Volunteer and 2 staff members. We asked what they like about Eco op, to give different examples and why, here's what they said;

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"There is friendship and support here"....

"I look forward to coming here - because I have friends here, we chat together"

"If I couldn't come to Eco op, I would lose my friends here; I would miss everyone being together"

"Here there is respect and caring"

"The staff are my friends"....

"We have lots of funny chats; they are helpful to me if I have a problem."

"They make me happy, the staff are caring"

"I help staff to go shopping and clean up, it makes them happy and it makes me happy"

"I enjoy coming to Eco Op because"....

"It a nice atmosphere - I like it because it's a calm, quiet place, I can sit and put the poppies together, it's relaxing for me away from stress."

"We go out on day trips and have celebrations"

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"I've got new skills"....

"I like learning new skills- I've learned a lot about fixing bikes, have got new knowledge and do the receipts. This is good experience for me to get employment. I already work another job volunteering, I like to keep busy, and it's hard for someone with special needs to get a job."

"By coming here I'm getting work experience, It will give me a good reference and I plan to get a job."



"If I couldn't go to Eco Op "....

"It wouldn't really affect me; I would have to find something else to do instead"

"I do house work and I work one day a week in a charity shop, but I enjoy going out, I'm independent. I would be really bored at home"

"The only other place I could go instead I wouldn't like to go because it's boring there- but they do art which I like and I don't do that here"

"I would feel angry if I couldn't come anymore - I would miss my friends"

"I would be sad, because I would feel lonely at home, there's nothing to do"

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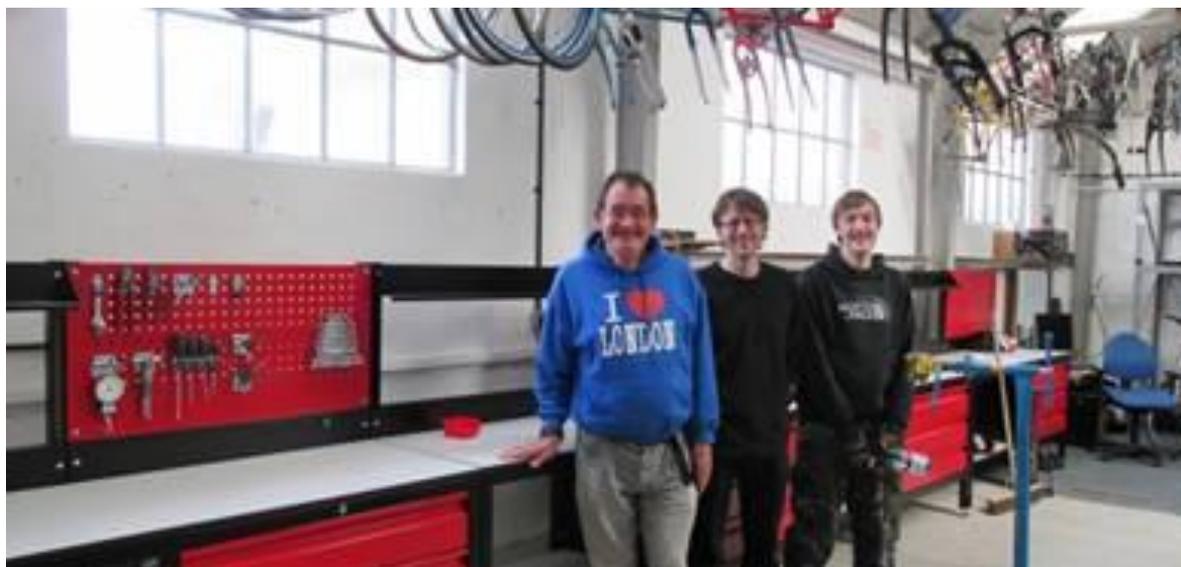
Staff and volunteers said....

"I enjoy watching the clients' progress and achieve their goals"

"The atmosphere here is great, people look forward to coming"

"In my time volunteering here I've learned how to communicate with people with a range of different needs, I've developed my people skills."

"It's great to see the clients improve in their personal life"



We asked the clients what they think could be improved, and for ideas how;

"I like making things; I would like to do more making"

"We have a sewing machine here; I have learned how to make cushions, I would like to make more"

"I like listening to the music here, I would like to have a piano"

"We could learn to play music instruments and have a teacher here so we can learn"

"I would like to try different activities".....

"I would like to do more making but with a variety of things- not just making boxes and poppies"

"It would be good if staff could arrange jobs for us to help people in the community, we could go and help"

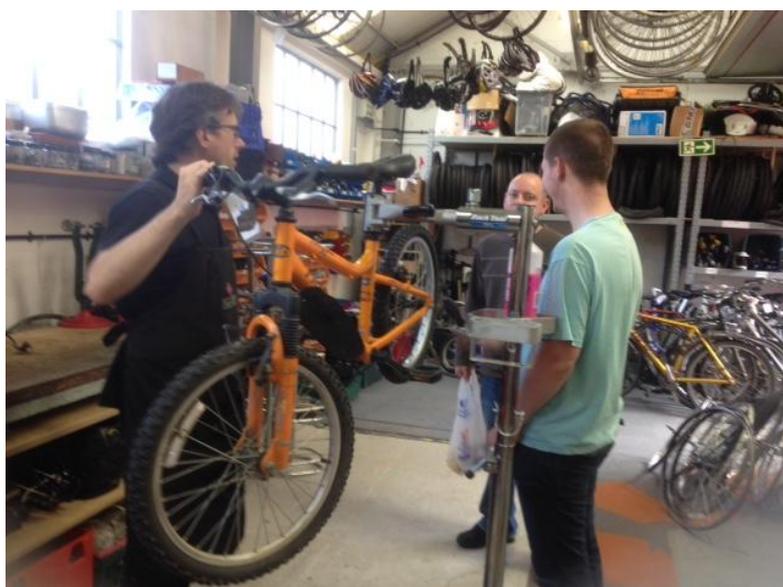
"We could get local shops to bring in things to pack or arrange"



We asked staff what could be improved...

“I’ve learned a lot about speaking to people with a range of disabilities - but I think it would be good to have formal training in areas such as mental health so I can better understand people’s needs”

“We could improve the training to clients by providing a professional qualification, along with an Improving Learning Plan- we would need more time and extra staff”



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Next steps....

- *Healthwatch Kingston will present this report to staff and clients at Eco Op to discuss*
- *Eco Op will listen to the views of all involved and take on board the recommendation and ideas brought up.*
- *Healthwatch Kingston will re - visit Eco Op to see if any changes have been made, and talk to people to see if they are happy with the changes*
- *Watch out for more news from Kingston Eco Op!*



Healthwatch Kingston would like to give a big thanks to all the clients, staff and volunteers at Eco Op for taking time to talk to us.