



Press Release



South Hams Connect – successful launch

Getting access to the services you need will be easier in the future following the successful launch of South Hams Connect - taking a wide range of public services nearer to South Hams' residents.

Whether you are looking for more information about claiming housing and council tax benefit, need transport to get to work, have a query about home safety, are searching for a new job or need help choosing a training course, the answer could be to call in for a chat at a South Hams Connect event.

Organised by South Hams District Council, South Hams Connect is designed to bring services offered by a variety of organisations, closer to the people who need them at a location convenient to them.

The new outreach service was launched on Tuesday 20th October 2009 at Quayside Leisure Centre, Kingsbridge. More than 20 organisations showcased their services helping people access information and advice without having to travel out of town.

South Hams District Councillor Hilary Bastone, whose portfolio includes customer services said: "Despite the, at times, very wet weather it was very encouraging to have so many people come along to the launch to find out what South Hams Connect is all about.

"The effort and enthusiasm put into the event by all the organisations taking part was very much appreciated and members of the public proved there is a need for this service by their interest.

"Not everyone has access to transport and by bringing together a wide range of organisations under the umbrella of South Hams Connect we hope to make it easier for people to use the services they need in a location convenient to them."

South Hams Connect is not just about bringing together council services in one location; the police, fire service, Jobcentre Plus, Age Concern plus a variety of other charities and organisations have come together to take their services right into the heart of towns and villages throughout the South Hams.

One such organisation is Devon Wheels2Work, a non-profit company helping people across Devon access work and training. They have stepped in to help Morgan Hale from East Allington who has a place on the Training for Life programme at the Dartmouth Apprentice. Working restaurant hours means public transport is not a viable option for him. Through Devon Wheels2Work, Morgan now has the loan of a motorbike to enable him to get to work.

Devon Wheels2Work Chief Executive Max Jowett firmly believes in the benefits of South Hams Connect. He said: "Please support South Hams Connect, we are able to reach many more people than we would otherwise and provide a valuable service to people of all ages especially in more rural areas which have fewer public transport links."

It is planned to hold regular South Hams Connect drop-in sessions at Quay House, Kingsbridge of the first and third Fridays of each month, between 10am and 12 noon.

Over the next twelve months South Hams Connect will be rolled out across the South Hams taking the drop-in events to local village halls and community centres and bringing a wide range of services closer to residents. .

For more information about South Hams Connect please contact Kate Hamp, Customer Services Manager, South Hams District Council on 01803 861234 or email kate.hamp@southhams.gov.uk

Notes

Devon Wheels 2 Work is a not-for-profit Community Interest Company (CIC) which loans scooters to individuals living in Devon who find it difficult to get to work because they do not have access to private or public transport. Loans last for three months. Individuals must pay a weekly contribution and have a plan to obtain their own transport at the end of the loan period. Devon Wheels2Work is funded by the South Devon Coastal Local Action Group, the European Union, DEFRA, South West Regional Development Agency and Leader. For more information call 0845 0944 308.

The organisations who will be taking part in the South Hams Connect launch include

- Age Concern
- Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue
- Devon Care and Repair
- Devon and Cornwall Police
- Devon Link
- Devon Wheels2Work
- Domestic Violence and Abuse Service
- Devon County Council DISC
- Devon County Council Transport
- Energy Action Devon
- Jobcentre Plus
- Kingsbridge Information Centre
- Royal National Institute for the Deaf
- South Hams CVS
- South West Water
- South Devon College
- South Hams District Council Housing Team
- South Hams District Council Benefits Team
- South Hams District Council Customer Services Team
- South West Pound
- Tor Homes