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How we started:

Boomerang Cardiff initially started back in August 2012, before a name had even been thought of, Paul Gwilym, founder of Boomerang Cardiff had a conversation with two homeless people one evening, it was at this moment Paul Gwilym's mind went into overdrive thinking of ways he could help. For the next few years Paul invested time and effort into helping the people that live on the streets of Cardiff, roping in other volunteers and meeting new people along the way. The desire to press on in providing basic essentials to those in need continued, so much so 2016 was the time to expand.

Through all the hard work, commitment and perseverance, Paul finally managed to secure keys to an industrial unit in the Splott area of the city, this is when things started to turn, Boomerang Cardiff now had a base. From a conversation with the homeless people of Cardiff, to helping to send out blankets and spare clothes, to sending out hot drinks and meals, the times finally turned, not for Boomerang itself, but for the endless list of ways in which they could help.

Boomerang Cardiff now had an established centre, to some just an empty unit, but to the boomerang team, a home, a place where we are able to stock supplies, prepare food, and bring the community together

Who are we?

Boomerang Cardiff are continuously developing new things to support the community, as a project has been developed over time and has worked well and at this time of austerity the demand for our service has severely increased. Boomerang Cardiff is a not for profit charitable organisation with the objective to prevent homelessness and/or relieve poverty to include in work poverty, deprivation and social isolation by providing items and services to individuals and families in need. Boomerang Cardiff unfortunately are not in a position to offer accommodation to reduce homelessness, however, what we can do is make life a little easier for those who reside on the streets of the city by providing basic essentials. In addition, we also provide support for anyone suffering hardship and financial strain, provide move on support for those progressing from homelessness and support for those residing in critical living conditions to include paying a large amount of attention to support 'In work poverty'.

Literally anyone who has a genuine need, Boomerang Cardiff are here to help without prejudice.

Our powerful strapline is simple,

'No one can help everyone, but everyone can help someone'.

Overview:

From research and community engagement we identified poverty, deprivation and social isolation are major issues within our community. Cardiff, year on year has seen population growth rise significantly, the community have identified the lack of infrastructure to accommodate the growth, lack of secure employment, housing, health, education, access to services and physical environment. In turn this has seen the significant drop in living standards across the country.

Through consultation and community engagement we identified generally when people think of poverty, many people do not even contemplate that much of the families and individuals on our own door step suffer daily, from homelessness, to those living in temporary accommodation, all the way to low income working families and everyone in between. The community identified living in poverty doesn't necessarily mean not working, it's common to fall below the poverty line due to a combination of factors such as unemployment, job insecurity, low contracted hours, low rates of pay and families where only

one person works, for example due to childcare needs, or even people are restricted to limited income due to physical challenges or mental health. Also contributing factors include cuts to local services such as social welfare, closures to community facilities, shortage of social housing, extortionate rental prices including agency fees in the private rental sector, debt Plus more.

Boomerang Cardiff work hand in hand with the community, the community have been a major player in everything achieved, have been involved in every stage of development, moving forward will continue to help shape a stronger, more sustainable community working together. Without support from our community we would not exist, we operate to deliver products and services for the community that are delivered by the community.

Boomerang Cardiff holds a number of characteristics that distance ourselves from other charities across the country. We don't means test, we are not single issue focussed but target the broader underlying causes, we include in work poverty, we do not discriminate, and we provide support to other charities in addition to front line services and a large amount of community groups. What's more, we really hate this term, but the phrase 'hospital bed blockers'. Very often, the occupational health team within hospitals do not allow patients to leave hospital due to certain home requirements, so in addition we assist our hospitals by providing essential equipment to allow patients to go home, freeing up beds for more patients to be treated.

We are not a static charity; we believe there are many factors of how a person's life can be impacted by homelessness, poverty and social isolation. By only supporting homelessness, poverty and social isolation individually, we would only be treating the symptoms, we want to bring it all together and combat the underlying causes.

The Work we do:

Under the umbrella of Boomerang Cardiff, there are three sections to the project:

- Homelessness/Prevention of Homelessness
- Poverty, In work poverty/Critical Living Conditions
- Social Isolation/Community Engagement/Education

We work across all 45 suburbs of Cardiff with our main base being in the Splott area of the city, perfectly positioned a stones throw away from the city centre allowing easy access, but also positioned in one of the most deprived areas of the Capital.

We make regular trips out to assist the homeless, we find out what their needs are, not necessarily what we believe their needs are. For those that reside on the streets of the city, we make life a little easier for those in need by providing tents, blankets, sleeping bags, clothes, thermals, hygiene essentials, first aid, advice, plus more. In addition, we work with around 50 regular front line support workers, identifying what the needs of low income families suffering are and we hold a consultation surgery twice a month with some smaller local community groups to find out where we can be best placed to support the community.

Furthermore, when homeless people finally manage to secure accommodation, our home start service has become invaluable. From research and the support of front line services, we have identified when an individual or family get the keys to a property, the property is usually empty, just a shell, by providing basic household essentials to furnish their property, this has made their home welcome and given them the opportunity get on their feet and give them confidence to transition back into the community, Boomerang Cardiff provide a basic home start package for everyone that approach our service moving on from homelessness. We provide, bed, wardrobes, drawers, sofa, pots, pans, crockery, plates cups dishes, kettle, toaster, table and chairs, often white goods included in addition to soft furnishings such as curtains and blinds for privacy, bedding, towels, pillows. We also include a food pack and hygiene/cleaning bag for a month. Every time we give out a home start pack, it is often to cater for a family of 4, giving those vulnerable citizens confidence to invite people for a cuppa in a comfortable setting and empowers them to re integrate back into society. Working to compliment council outreach teams and homeless shelters, they have identified and informed us that homeless people are more likely to sustain accommodation, as our support has empowered and built self-esteem to transition back into the community.

In addition, for those residing in critical living conditions, possibly even at risk of losing their children, or have dangerous or broken household items such as a bed, somewhere to sit, even a fridge or something to cook food, we have created a short form for our beneficiaries to fill out for requests, it is very informal and relaxing and they sit down with a member of our team who assist them at every stage of the process, but also reassure them, offer advice and sign post to services they may have not been aware of for support. The forms are not a means test as we have come to knowledge that low income working families

are often left out due to having a working status and often it's low income working families who are worst off. By doing this it allows us to monitor where and how the help is distributed, in turn will allow us to follow trends and stay on top of what is so desperately needed within our society. We prioritise our case load, for those who are able to collect, we provide items there and then, for those who require a delivery we usually can get delivered within 24 hours. I must stress we are not a shop and we do not sell any items, we provide items on a needs basis to those in crisis, so for someone in need of a sofa, it shouldn't matter what colour it is as it's a need not a want. we gift items out on a needs basis with no charge and we have a rule that we would not give any items that we wouldn't be prepared to use ourselves or for our family members so are always in a reasonable condition.

What we do is reach out to the generous public, let them know we are here to help, our organisation to date has 100% relied on donations of household equipment, we flash post all over social media and create videos to engage with the public, let them know that what may no longer be of use to them may be hugely beneficial to a family suffering hardship or financial strain. For those that don't use social media platforms we have created posters and leaflets giving them the option to recycle their unwanted items by gifting them to families a little less fortunate. Its hassle free, people can drop items to our unit or we offer a free collection service.

Boomerang Cardiff as a community project without any funding, have managed to create a community centre that is open to all, large adult/child friendly hall, toddler section, fully functional kitchen where we cook meals for the homeless and will offer cooking courses. A separate Warehouse where we hold furniture, plus a room where we stock supplies for the homeless. This enable us to bring the most vulnerable in society together, stock supplies, organise deliveries/collections, it can be daunting asking for help so somewhere to sit with beneficiaries in a relaxed setting to find how best we can support them plus drop off point to the community and provide a welcoming space for the community to combat social isolation. We offer space to the community that aim to improve quality of life, combat social isolation, provide a vehicle for social mobility, improve health and well-being and create opportunities for the community to better their life. Using our centre, we want to enhance education and build life skills, bring people together and share knowledge to help one another to live their life to the best of their ability.

Moreover, in the near future, we will be looking for experienced ex-professional volunteers to have on hand who maintain, upcycle and PAT test damaged and unwanted items to maximise our potential, more available items mean more potential people in need, we can support. In the near future, once we have made sure we are in a sustainable position we plan to offer courses in maintenance and upcycling and further down the line would love to get to a position where we are able to hold our own recycling centre which would create jobs, teach skills, provide work experience and build confidence and in the process make the charity self-sustaining. We have the potential to expand into the unit next to us, we have the skills and the manpower, however, we are walking before we can run.

Our mission:

Our mission is simple, to support people that are down in their luck quickly and efficiently to enable them to get back on their feet, empowering them to get on with their life In a way that no other local authority or organisation currently are in the area.

- To provide a wide range of household items to those in need – From homelessness to temporary accommodation all the way through to low income working families and everyone in between.
- Providing a space for local groups and charities to meet without financial Strain with the objective of improving quality of life and to combat social isolation
- Develop our own support meetings/groups/education opportunities through community engagement, utilising skills, experience, knowledge and people power to make a positive difference to people's lives across the capital
- The objective behind boomerang Cardiff and result we want to achieve is one of a simple nature, to empower people to live their lives to the best of their ability with a sense of achievement and their dignity intact.
- Our target audience are anybody and everybody with a genuine need without discrimination or prejudice.
- Including low income working families.

What do we do?

- Provide a wide range of items to support frontline services within the third sector
- Supply clothing, blankets, sleeping bags and tents
- Provide hygiene essentials and first aid
- Provide a wide range of household items to those in need
- Support for those living with financial difficulties and/or down on their luck
- Offer a mentoring service
- Support groups
- Community based activities and workshops
- Provide volunteering opportunities
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We secured our premises 21 October 2016 and since then we have supplied and helped the following:

- 2100 families received much needed help with household items
- 7500 homeless meals delivered on our weekly runs into the City Centre – During the runs we hand out a range essentials Food slows at certain periods of the year e.g. winter, as additional groups hit the streets, however, we continue with basic essentials and make links with groups involved)
- Helped 6 people living homeless to secure accommodation and given them a sense of direction by offering them to become a part of our boomerang family, 2 of which volunteer daily
- 1500 school children, at their schools, have taken part in group discussions regarding living in poverty and well-being
- 30 community groups received help with educational reading equipment/social interactive learning toys
- Provided Christmas time gift packs for over 250 refugees and families seeking asylum
- Provided Christmas gift bags to over 1000 people/families living in hostels or on the streets of Cardiff.
- Gifted presents to wounded, injured and sick service men and women and their families
- Facilitate ongoing community support groups and projects
- Community based activities, workshops and Educational courses

Boomerang up to now is solely run and managed by volunteers, volunteers from the community have been hugely influential in interacting and liaising with the community, as well as delivering outcomes for the community.

Within the centre, we currently have 4 successful regular support groups who use the facilities to meet without financial strain to include our most successful ongoing group 'People in Pain' which entails education, diet, exercising, personal management.

Using our centre what we are developing in addition with community participation:

- Offer a mentoring service (Something which we are currently developing)
- Back to work programme to include CV writing, interview skills, personal presentation and team building exercises
- CV writing & Interview skills
- Motivational speaking, confidence building
- Coffee mornings to build self esteem
- Community Social cohesion & integration programme
- Community based activities, workshops and Educational courses
- Training courses open to all such as – dealing with finances, recycling, sign language/Makaton, living with mental health
- Father/Mother and toddler groups for those that find it difficult to spend quality time with their children

- Volunteer opportunities and roles could include customer service, driving, drivers mate, warehouse person, stock control, researcher, upcycling, maintenance, admin, street operatives, facilitating support groups, general community centre roles, fundraising & events organiser, mentoring, family support, debt/money advise, promotional media, Plus more.